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Cross rightly born would, in a word, notably h
to follow Christ.

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take up and bear patiently, and pleasantly our
particular Crosses shaped to us; If any man (sayeth
Lord here) *will come after me, let him take up his c*
and follow me; The way of following of Christ, h
hedged as it were, with thorns, that through ma
Tribulations & Afflictions all that will follow hi
must needs enter into the Kingdom of God; a
the Christian race, and course of Godliness hath
many enemies on all hands, and from all quarte
that the man who resolves not to suffer for Chri
will make no progress in it; There is nothing mo
frequently proposed unto, and pressed upon
the professt followers of Christ than this; and it
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powerfully pressed, and put home by all the
weighty arguments which follow our *Text*, to th
close of the *Chapter*, which are all linked toge
ther with this, that *if any man will come aft*
Christ, he must deny himself, take up his cross and fo
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tend and follow his followers, while they so
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FINIS.

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FINIS.

THE GREAT GAIN OF CONTENTING GODLINESS

Commended in Four SERMONS, By Master *JAMES DURHAM*;

To which is prefixed a Preface upon the same Subject, By Mr. *JOHN CARSTAIRS*;

Both late eminent Ministers of the Gospel in the City of *GLASGOW*.

EDINBURGH,
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ANNO DOM. 1685.

SERMON I.

1 *Timothy.* 6. *Chap.* 6. 7. 8. Verſes.

But godlineſs with contentment is great gain.

IN theſe two Epiſtles written to *Timothy*, and in that to *Titus*. The Holy Ghoſt by *Paul* the Apoſtle, inſtructeth and directeth them, and in them all Miniſters of the Goſpel, eſpecially in that profitable doctrine which they ought to propoſe to their hearers; And his great Scope therein is, in the midſt of all Debates and Queſtions, to ingadge them to commend and preſs the exerciſe of godlineſs, and the practice of Religion, as that which was mainly called for from both themſelves, and the people to whom they preached.

In the beginning of this *Chapter*, he hath been giving directions what they ſhould teach Servants (for Religion condeſcends ſo low, that it miſſeth perſons of no quality, rank or ſtation) and becauſe there were two very groſs practical errors intertained amongſt ſome Chriſtian Servants at that time of the Goſpels beginning to ſpread, tending to looſneſs, and undue liberty in them that were ſuch; he meets with, and removes both ſhortly; One whereof was, That theſe who were tyed to unbelieving Maſters, or *Hea-*

thens; when they were called by the Gospe
thought that they were then, and thereby loos
from all subjection and servitude to them; T
this he speaks in the *first verse*, and will hav
Servants that have unbelieving Masters, to re
spect them, *and count them worthy of all honou*
not unduely to desert them, but to serve the
so much the more faithfully; And he gives a no
table reason for this, *That the name of God, and t*
doctrine be not blasphemed; for Religion looser
no tye of that kind. The other was, that the
who served Christian and believing Maste
thought, that because they and their Maste
were Brethren in Christ, that therefore th
were not bound to do them such service, nor
give them such respect as they were wont to d
This he meets with, *verse 2d.* and tells them
That such as had believing masters, should not d
slight them, but serve them so much the rather wi
all due respect, because they were such. It
the way of deceitful and corrupt nature, to draw
arguments to undue liberty and lousness from
quite contrary grounds; If Masters were *Pagan*
Servants thought they should not serve such Ma
sters at all; If they were Christians, they thought
they were equal to their Masters, and so not
oblidged to continue in the low relation of Ser
vants to them; but the grace of God teaches the
just contrary, upon the same contrary ground
from which corrupt nature would draw its argu
ments to unsuitable liberty, lousness and licenti
ousness; and he closeth the 2d. *verse* with this
charge. *These things teach and exhort*, let them
know these things to be the mind of God, and
exhort them to the performance of them: It
one

part of a Miniſters duty to inſtruct and in-
the judgement of their hearers, and another
eſs neceſſary part thereof, to exhort them to,
preſs on them the practice of uncontroverted
ies: And ye would remember this, and take
long with you, that we who preach the Go-
to you, are not only, or not ſo much to
poſe new things to you, as to preſs you to the
ctice of theſe things which ye already know,
But the Apoſtle knowing well that where gid-
eſs once ariſe, and licentiouſneſs began to be
riſhed, they would not ſoon nor eaſily be for-
e; and that there would be ſome who would
ily teach otherways then he had done, and
ld not acquieſce in this wholſome Doctrine
ght by *Timothie*; Therefore he meets with, and
icipats this Objection to the words read in-
ſively, and anſwers it theſe *three* or *four* ways,
by ſaying theſe *three* or *four things*: And *firſt*,
ſays he) *If any man teach otherways* (which
ppoſeth that ſome would teach otherways)
*and conſent not to wholſome words, even the words
our Lord, and the doctrine which is according
godlineſs, he is proud*; and *2dly knowing no
thing*; two ſtrange deſignations that are given to
theſe who think themſelves able teachers, and
men of great parts, but ſayes the Apoſtle on the
matter; they are not really holy, whatever ſeem-
ing holineſs they have; but *they are proud*; an
though they think themſelves to be very unde-
ſtanding men, and ſuch as are able to teach in-
ſtruct, direct and rectifie others, *they know o-
thing*, to wit, as they ought to know: A *3d. thing*,
attributed to them is, *dotting about queſtions and
ſtrifs of words*, the word *dotting*, is rendered

ſick on the Margent, and ſignifies indeed to ſick, or languiſhing; and ſayes this much, if ever ſuch men had any true good in them, under a decay, languiſhing and wearing aw and they are become ſick, by being occupied frivolous and un-edifying *queſtions and ſtrif words*, that come not neer the life of godlin and power of Religion: *2dly.* He anſwers ſhewing the effects that followed on this kin teaching; (wherein he gives a further hin the nature of it) *whereof* (ſayeth he,) *co envy, ſtrife, railings, evil ſurmiſings* (or *deemi* as the word is rendered, *Acts* 27. *v.* 27.) *ſtions and ſtrifs about words*, which only aw and ſtir up envy, bitter railings evil ſurmiſi or deemings, jealouſies, and ſuſpicions, and verſe diſputings in place of the practice of go neſs, which ought to be taught and preſſed Miniſters, and followed by the People; ſu Teachers turn all into perverſe diſputings that wayes tend to edification. *3dly:* He anſwers diſcribing the principle whereby ſuch Teach walk, It is not godlineſs, whatever they pret but gain, credit and reputation, favour w men, wealth and eaſe, and whatever conduc thereunto, This is it which in effect they take be godlineſs. O! great and groſs miſtake: to t part of his anſwer he ſubjoyns this comman *from ſuch withdraw thy ſelf*; And indeed wh men are acted by ſuch a principle as this, there but very little ground of hope that they will gained: The way to ſuppreſs ſuch corrupt tea ers, is not to flock to hear them when th ſpeak, nor to diſput with them, but its to wi draw from them; and it takes in (we think

th an injoyned Eccleſiaſtical Diſciplinary Se-
ration from them, and a withdrawing from
em in reſpect of ordinary and familiar con-
erſe. 4*ly.* He oppoſeth to this their way, that
hich he mainly drives at in the Text, as being
oſt proper and profitable for *Timothy*, and all
her Miniſters of the Goſpel to preach, and for
ople to hear, and be taken up with, as their
ain work and buſineſs? in oppoſition to their
debates, ſtrifes of words and peryerſe diſput-
gs. He ſays, *But godlineſs with contentment is*
eat gain: There is a vaſt difference betwixt
t way which is waited with cavilling, railling,
. And Godlineſs that is attended with ſo
ch true gain; and ſo he doth compare with,
poſe, and prefer unto that froathie and fruitleſs
y of queſtioning, and diſputing, which many
ice a great deal of Piety and Religion in,
e ſerious and ſolid exerciſe of Godlineſs, as
herways, ſo particularly in the practice of theſe
common duties betwixt Maſters and Servants,
nd of every one in their reſpective Stations and
elations; And this he brings in to fill *Timothies*
hand with; and to ſhape out profitable work for
the People, to whom he preached the Goſpel:
This certainly can never come wrong to be either
preached or practiſed, but hath always great
gain attending and following it.

In the Words we may take notice of theſe
four. 1*o.* The thing that *Paul* propoſeth to *Timo-*
thie, as profitable, and which he oppoſeth to the
vanitie of theſe men, that were taken up with
Queſtions and Debates, and thought little or no-
thing of the practice of Religious Duties, which
is *Godlineſs*, the word imports a right worſhip-

ing of God, *viz.* according to the Rule that hath laid down in His Word; and we take generally to comprehend the duties both of the first and second Table of the Law, both our dutie to God, and our dutie to Man. *2ly.* The commendation that he gives it, *It's great gain*, not only a commanded and necessary thing, it's a commendable thing, and hath not only gain, but great gain and increase attending it. It's the best studie that ever a man betook himself to, the best bargain that ever he made, the most profitable work and imployment that ever he ingadged in; there is much to be wone, and nothing to be lost by it, *3dly*, A particular property of it, or an instance of the great gain of it, *godliness with contentment*, which supposes not a Separation, but rather a Conjunction of Godliness and Contentment; and his meaning is this, that whereas other things satisfie not, and not content and quiet the mind of man, this contents and satisfies, and so brings along with it great gain, There is a sufficiency in Holiness and this is a proof of it's being great gain. The coherence and connexion of these words with the former, holden forth in the particle *But*, whereby it's clear, that Godliness is opposed unto, compared with, and preferred to all these questionings, debates and strifes about words, which of he hath been speaking; and it comes in by way of direction to *Timothie*, and in him to other Ministers of the Gospel, how to be occupied and taken up, not with these disputings, but with pressing the practice of Godliness, that is so very profitable, while these are prejudicial and hurtful.

For the *first* of those, and to open up the meaning of the words a little further, we shall *Observe*.

That there is such a thing required in the word of God, and from his people, as Godliness; or simply thus, *There is such a thing as Godliness commanded and commended to the people of God:* for the Apostle doth not speak here, of a thing that hath not a being; I mean, that there is such a peculiar thing as Godliness, a thing that is not common to all the hearers of the Gospel; we might think that this needed not to be observed, and far less to be proved; yet it is for good uses; *Refuse* (saves the Apostle *Chap.* 4. *v.* 7.) *old wives fables, and exercise thy self rather to godliness*; The Lord gives so many Directions and Rules to his People, how to walk according to it; He so often teacheth, and presseth it, and that as the great end of the Gospel. *Tit.* 2. 12. *The grace of God which bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men, teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly*; He useth so many expostulations for the want of it; he doth so much commend and reward it; It hath so many sweet fruits and effects following it; the want of it is so much accursed of God, and the having of it is so much blessed of him, as having his favour here and hereafter, that it might be thought needless, so much as to propose it, let be to stay on the confirmation of it,

The *use* of it serveth to perswade you, to let the faith and conviction of it seize upon, and sink into your hearts, That there is such a peculiar thing called for from you, as Godliness: The *Reasons* of our pressing this are. 1. Be-

cause we think it Scarsely believed by most that there is such a thing; If we look to the lives of the greatest part of men and women, do they not live as if there were no such thing at all? that prophanity, carelessness, and ignorance of God that abound, say plainly, that it is not really believed; And as *David* says, *Psal.* 36. *The transgression of the wicked sayeth within my heart, that there is no fear of God before his eyes*; So may we say, that the practice and the life of such declare plainly, that they do not indeed believe, that there is any such thing as Godliness; There are many *who*, (as the Apostle tells us, 2 *Tim.* 3. 5. *have a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof*; and *who*, (as the same Apostle says, *Tit.* 1. 16.) *profess to know God, but in works do deny him.* 2*ly.* (Which strongly confirms and palpably holds forth the thing) Because there are so many practical errors, and mistakes about Godliness; many taking the form for the power of it, and fancieing any common gift, or work of the Spirit, any thing that is but like Godliness, to be it. 3*ly.* Because of the great Securitie, and Self-pleasing, that the most part of Men and Women have in this their way, as if they had made great progress, & were far on in it, when yet they come never near to Godliness; For is it possible that people durst, for their very Souls be so prophane, yea come to that height of prophanity, as to count serious Godliness to be a phansie, if they really believed that there is such a thing? They think all to be well enough, if they walk but civilly, and keep themselves externally blameless. It will therefore seasonably and pertinently be *asked* here, What is Godliness? I *answer* in short, *Godli-*

ness

it is an habitual exercise in the right or due discharge or practice of all commanded duties: and thus it is not only opposed to prophanity and ungodliness; but it's differenced, 1. From meer civility, which aims no further, but at a living friendly with men, and to be approven of them; This hath a higher flight, and goeth further, seeking to walk friendly with God, and to be approven of him in these duties. 2*ly*, It is differenced from vain speculative knowledge of the things of God, and of religious duties, it puts a man upon endeavours, not only to know, but also concernedly to practice what he knows, the end of knowledge being practice, and we knowing no more in Gods account, that what we make conscience to practise; It puts *to seek and keep all Gods commands.* 3*ly*, It's differenced from all superstition and error, for it's a *right* practice of duties according to the divinely prescribed Rule, otherwayes it's not Godliness 4*ly*. It's differenced from a plain counterfeit of Religion, from an hypocritical and bare external form of performing duties; It puts not only to Pray, to hear the Word, to read the Scriptures, to give Almes, *&c.* but to do them aright, or after *a godly sort*, as the word is, 2 *Cor.* 7. 11. There is such a thing as a *godly sort*, and a carnal or worldly sort of performing every dutie, there is a carnal sort of believing, praying, hearing, *&c.* And there is a godly sort of doing these, and every other dutie called for towards God, and towards men. 5*ly*. It's differenced from transient and quickly passing fits and starts, it's a continued strain and series of well-doing, therefore we call it an *habitual* exercise. 6*ly*, It's differ-

renced from superficial scroofing, overlineſs and trifling in called-for Duties, therefore we call it a *exercise*, to ſhew that it is an uptaking buſſineſs: It not only takes up the head and tongue, but the hand and heart, even the whole man, the inward faculties of the Soul, as well as the outward man.

We ſhall further hold out this right, or due practice of called-for Dutie, in theſe *Four*, 1. It requires that we have a right, or a Godly End in our performances, a higher end then the pleaſing of others, or the profiting of our ſelves only, and mainly, an end that tends God-ward, to his honour and glory, as we are commanded, 1 *Cor.* 10. 31. *To do whatever we do, to the glory of God*; and this end muſt needs run through the duties of our particular callings, yea, through every natural action of eating and drinking, even through all duties of the firſt and ſecond Table of Gods Law, thus Godlineſs puts a Servant *to do ſervice* to his Maſter, *as to the Lord Christ*. 2*ly*, It requires that our performances be not by gueſs, or at random, nor arbitrary, or according to our own will and pleaſure, but according to the Rule of Godlineſs, called, *v.* 4. *The doctrine that is according to Godlineſs*; which allows not to live, act and walk by corrupt inclination, cuſtom, paſſion, humour, revenge, and the like, but by that ſtraight and un-erring Rule, that directs how to promote Holineſs, how to mortifie Luſts, how to conform to Chriſt, that great, infallible, and perfect patern of Holineſs, it puts to ſquare all according to that Rule. 3*ly*, It requires that the dutie be right, as to the manner of performing the ſame, according to that Word, 2 *Cor.* 7. 11.

sorrowed after a godly sort, or manner: That be performed affectionatly, zealously, tenderly, &c. There is a sort of stamp or impression put a dutie, when perfomed in the due manner, at makes it to have an other sort of liveliness in elf; and another sort of lustre, and splendor to hers, at least, such as have a spiritual eye, then hen it is carnally gone about. 4*ly*, It requires Godly Principle, that it proceed from a principle of Spiritual Life within; It must not proceed from the strength of un-renewed nature, rom flesh, *For that which is born of the flesh, is flesh*, but (as I said) from a Godly living principle within, from Godliness in the heart, springing out in the life; This is that which we call Godliness, and which the Scriptures account to be Godliness.

Secondly, *Observe* (which is a further improvement of the other) *That this habitual practice of holy duties, which we call Godliness, is the great, the main, and the principal thing that the Lord hath proposed to his people, to be taken up with, and hath laid on them as their great task and work.* It is not only, or mainly to come by a great measure of knowledge, or to be able to speak, if it were like Angels; It's not to seek after a great name, and to be much esteemed of by others; It's not to be of a very fair, civil and blameless outward carriage only, nor to be taken up in immediate duties of worship only, (though those would take up much) nor is it to live a solitary life in meer speculations; but it's to be in the practise of Godliness in all manner of conversation; In all capacities, callings, stations and relations; To be Godly Masters, and Servants, Husbands and Wives,

Wives, Parents and Children; In a word, it's to be in every one of these (as God hath set a person in his providence) Godly, to be abounding in the work of the Lord; To be taken up with duties of immediat worship to God, and in all duties of Love to Men; Therefore, when the Apostle hath been speaking of many things, he returns to this, *But godliness with contentment is great gain*; He differenceth Godliness from many words, and much questioning and disputing about Religion, which supposeth knowledge, and opposeth it unto, and exceedingly prefers it before these, as a quite other thing; so *Chap.* 4. *v.* 7. When he rejects their frivolous questions, and dry debates, as being as useless, unedefying and unprofitable, as old wives fables, or tales use to be, he exhorts Godly *Timothie* thus, *and exercise thy self rather unto godliness*, This is the end for which we have the precious Gospel, and so many Promises; *The grace of God* (sayeth he to *Titus*, *Chap.* 2. *v.* 11. 12.) *which bringeth Salvation, hath appeared unto all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world*; It's the great lesson that the Gospel gives Men and Women to learn, even to live Godly. To this end are all the instructions and directions in the World, clearing us in our several duties to God and Man; all the motives pressing them; all the Promises made to them; and all the expostulations for neglect of them; All which manifestly declare this to be the acceptable will of God concerning us, *even our Sanctification.*

The *Reasons*, why the Lord proposeth this unto, and calleth for this from his People as their great task, work and business, are shortly these,

1.

Because it's only this that is answerable to his aims, it's the native fruit of the Ordinances, and of his Grace held out, and offered freely therein; It's that which mainly suits and beseems his Grace, that we have our fruit unto Holiness. 2*ly*, Because it's the only thing that differenceth a right hearer from one that is but a carnal, and a counterfit hearer of the Word; a form of Godliness will not do the bussiness, if there be not the power of Godliness in practice. 3*ly*. Because this is it that proves honourable to God, and nothing else without it; what honour and advantage (to speak so, for if we speak properly, He is not capable of any advantage from the creature, being God all-sufficient, and infinitely happy in the injoyment of himself) hath God of his Church, but that the practice of Holiness is there? What honour or advantage hath he in a Believer, but that he bring forth fruit? *John* 15. *Herein* (sayeth our Lord) *is my Father glorified, that ye bring furth much fruit*; It's this which in a special manner adorns the Doctrine of the Gospel. 4*ly*. Because it's this which is most profitable to others, and to our selves; *Godliness* (saith the Apostle, *Chap.* 4. 8.) *is profitable to all things*; all our knowledge and other gifts, all our profession, and what ever else we have without this, will be unprofitable, and turn into vanitie and nothing; It's especially practice and obedience that the Lord requires, *Obedience* (sayeth *Samuel* to *Saul*, 1 *Sam.* 15.) *is better then sacrifice.*

The *first use* of the *Doctrine* serves for informatione; as by the former Doctrine, ye would know that there is such a thing as Godliness, so by this ye would know that Godliness is the great thing that is called for from

you; It's not enough (as we said) to come to the Church, to have knowledge and profession, but its the practice of common and known duties that will carry Gods approbation: If we might compare the meaneſt dutie that a Maſter injoyns his Servant rightly performed, after the due manner, and levelled at the right end, with a great profeſſion, and big talking of Religion, the one will paſs before God rather, and be found to lye nearer to the life of Religion, and Godlineſs, then the other: Do not therefore miſtake Godlineſs, it's among our hands, and often (as it were) among our feet, in theſe things that we think but little of.

The 2d. *uſe* ſerves for reproof to many hearers of the Goſpel; if it be true that Godlineſs is the great thing called for, the great thing commanded and commended by the Lord, how will the moſt part be able to anſwer for the groſs neglect of it? Is there any number to count upon among the great multitude that pretend to Godlineſs, that knows the peculiar way of Godlineſs, as differenced from meer civilitie, hypocriſie, formalitie, bare knowledge, and the like? If the moſt part were tryed by this, and weighed in this ballance, their Godlineſs would be found light: Call in the Drunkard, the Swearer, the unclean Perſon, the man that prayes none, the mocker of Piety, *&c.* Who know not what it is, to do duties from a principle of Conſcience, if they do at all believe this to be the truth of God, they muſt needs plead guilty, and confeſs that they are utterly wanting in that which God mainly ealls for; And if we ſhall come to them that are more civil, that keep the Church, that have an honeſt outward life and walk, and

it

may be, the commendation of their neighbours, that is all that, if there be no more, to Godliness? That which is called for, is to be Godly in your conversation; Godliness is not only, to be religious before men, but also before God; to have a religious rule, principle and end; it's not only to go about the duties of your callings honestly before men; else what more do ye then *Heathens*? who will live friendly with their neighbours, and deal honestly in their bargains, and who, in their externally blameless walk, it may be, will go beyond many of you who profess to be Christians; yea, it's not only faith which we call you to, and which many of you satisfie your selves with the opinion of, and maintain your security by; but it's the power of Godliness evidencing it self in good works, from a right principle, and to a right end; *What profits faith without works, my brethren?* saith *James*, *Chap.* 2. He is not taking in, far less preferring works to faith, in the matter of Justification before God; yet he would have them conjoyned with faith in our practice, and conversation; yea, it's one of the great evidences of faith, and one of the great ends wherefore he gives faith, even that it may be exercised on Christ, for Godliness and Good Works; and we accordingly call for Fruits of your Faith, or rather for a sound Faith, that hath always Fruits: Or if we shall come yet further, to some that have a form of Prayer in their Families, and in Secret, who attend on Ordinances without staying aback, or running away from them (as some do; and it may be, if the station of some amongst us brought them not, they would be very seldome found in duties of publick wor-

worship: But what is all that to Godliness, if that be all? It's not hearing, reading, praying, a sort of sadness for sin now and then, that will prove you to be Godly, But it's the habitual practice of duties in a Godly manner; That ye provide for your Families, and do the duties of your general and particular callings in a godly manner; That ye seek first the Kingdom of God to your Selves, to your Families, Wives and Children, and other things in the next and lower Room; God will never count that to be Godliness, to postpone Heaven to these other things; Nay, even in labouring for these other things, ye must do it in a Godly manner; In your love to Wife, Husband, Children, and other Relations, ye must be Godly; not only in your Praying, Reading, Singing, Discoursing in the Familie, ye must be Godly; But also in your lawful callings, whatever they be; If this be not, all the preaching that ye hear, and all the profession of Faith, and of Godliness that ye have will not profit you, nor avail you any thing in the day of Gods reckoning with you, because ye gave not him that *which* he mainly called for, which is Godliness.

SERMON II.

1. *Timothy* 6. *Verses* 6. 7. 8.

But *Godliness with contentment is great gain.* &c.

They are not a little advanced in Religion, that come the length of knowing, and believing really that Godliness is, and what

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re the many great and excellent advantages of it; The most part either quite mistake Godliness, and think that any thing like it is it; or they undervalue it, and put not at all any such price upon it as it deserves.

THe Apostles great Scope here is, to commend to Christians in all Times, in all Places, and in all Stations and Relations, the singular worth of the Practice of Piety, or Godliness, and the preheminence that it hath above all the Pleasure, Profit and honour in the World, yea, above the greatest gifts of knowledge, utterance and the like, on which in these days many put the greatest price.

We shewed what is meant by Godliness, even the habitual, right practice and exercise of the clear and common dutiet which the Lord calleth for in his Word; The right practice of the duties of immediate worship towards God, and the right practice of the duties that we owe one to another in our several callings, stations and relations; that we be sincerely and seriously Godly in both, as the nature of them doth require.

That which is the Scope of the Words, is the great commendation that the Apostle puts on the practice of Godliness, laid down as a motive to stir up to it.

The *Doct.* that we shal insist on at this time is, the very Words

Words of the Text, *That Godliness is great gain*, or *that there is great gain in the practice of Godliness to all it's followers*: There is great utilitie or profit, a mighty advantage in the right following of it; This is the expreſs aſſertion of the Apoſtle, who not only ſayeth, that *it's gain*, or a thing uſeful, as many things in the world are; but that *it is great gain*, or exceeding uſeful; a Phraſe that ſets out the advantage of Godlineſs in the higheſt degree; It's more then any ordinary or common gain, that is to be had by the following of it, *It's great gain*; *Bodilie exerciſe* (ſayeth the Apoſtle, *Chap.* 4. 8.) *profiteth little, but Godlineſs is profitable to all things, having the promiſe of the life that now is, and of that which is to come*; Where he ſets out the univerſalitie and vaſt extent of this Gain; ſo that in effect there is nothing but it extends to it, there is nothing, but there is advantage in it by being Godly, and there is nothing wherein Godlineſs hath not this waiting on it, even *great gain*: happineſs is ſummed up in it, *Pſal.* 112. *v.* 1. *Bleſſed is the man that feareth the Lord*, and that is nothing elſe but to be Godly, So *Pſal.* 119. *Bleſſed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord*; and *Pſal.* 1. *v.* 1. *Bleſſed is the man that walketh not in the counſel of the ungodly*, &c. and that ſame is the godly man; certainly theſe magnificent Titles, *Great Gain*, *profitable to all things*, *bleſſed or happie*, are not vain words, but are made uſe of on deſign, to ſet out the very exceeding great, the inconceivably great gainfulneſs, uſefulneſs, and profitableneſs of Godlineſs. Conſider it more particularly, and yet but generally; for it is impoſſible to go through the

the particulars of it, This is a deep gulf wherein words might be ſwallowed up, but to glance at it a little; The gain of Godlineſs may be looked at as theſe ſeveral ways extended, 1. Look to the extent of it's gain, as to perſons of every Sex, Age, Rank, Qualitie, Calling, Capacity, Station and Relation, it's exceeding profitable to all that have it; It's the true honour and glory of great Men, who are often in Scripture commended on the account of their Godlineſs, but never upon the ſimple account of their greatneſs; It's the glory of old age, and gray hairs; the beauty and ornament of youth; It's preſſed on Servants, as that which makes them adorn the Doctrine of the Goſpel. *Tit.* 2. 10. It is likeways commended in Wives, 1 *Pet.* 3. 4. *Above outward adorning, plaiting of the hair, wearing of gold, or putting on of apparel. Even the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, a meek and quiet ſpirit, which is of great price before God:* This being it which is more commendable in it ſelf, and more profitable to them. 2*ly*. Look to the extent of it, as to all caſes and conditions; It is profitable in proſperity, and in want, making always in every ſtate content; in health, it's even ſoundneſs to the bones, and hath an inward life and cheerfulneſs attending it, in ſickneſs, and at death, it's then eminently found to be profitable; and it's great gain, and advantage then beautifully bloſſoms and breaks forth, when all earthly comforts wither, it then in a ſpecial manner puts on a moſt pleaſant verdure or greenneſs. 3. Look to the extent of it's gain and profit, as to all duties; It is profitable in duties of immediat worſhip, *Know*

ye (saith *David*, *Pſal.* 4.) *that the Lord hath ſet apart him that is godly for himſelf*; but the want of it quite mars and obſtructs all acceſs to God, and acceptance before him in duties of worſhip; It's profitable, in the duties of men ordinary callings, *Pſal.* 1. *whatſoever the godly man doth ſhall proſper*; when *the very plowing of the wicked is ſin*, the plowing, eating, drinking, bargaining, *&c.* of the Godly man is acceptable. 4*ly*. Look to the extent of it, in reſpect of all ſorts of gain, temporal and eternal, *It hath the promiſe of this life, and of that which is to come*; It hath outward gain, ſo far as it is meet for themſelves, and often to others, in whoſe company they are, and always inward gain, in reſpect of themſelves in their ſecret converſe with, and in their walk before him.

We ſhall yet a little further commend it to you, by ſpeaking to *two* or *three uſes* of the point, for it's moſt comprehenſive, and if any Doctrine may warrantably be propoſed and preſſed, ſure this may; And as the Apoſtle ſayes, ſpeaking of good works, *Tit.* 3. 8. *Theſe things are good and profitable to men*: So we may very confidently ſay that this Doctrine is eminently ſo, and will be found to be ſo, to all that ever eſſayed it in good earneſt.

And therefore, for *uſe*, 1. Let it exhort you to ſtudy Godlineſs more, that ye may not be Chriſtians in word only, but in deed and in truth; If ye believe the Scriptures to be the Word of God, ye muſt needs aſſent to this in your Judgement that Godlineſs is a profitable thing; and if any Doctrine in it be a truth, that this is moſt certainly one; there being nothing more frequently

quently commanded and commended; nothing the neglect wherof is more frequently and ſeverly puniſhed, and the practice of it more frequently and richly rewarded: And indeed, if the experiences of all militant, and triumphing Saints, whom God hath thought good to make in hope and full poſſeſſion reſpectively partakers of the lightſome, glorious, never-fading inheritance, were gathered together, they would be ſo many pregnant proofs of the truth of it; The doolful experience alſo of all the damned in hell, who are now reaping, and eating the fruit of their own ungodly ways confirms it; If we did by faith liſten, and lend our ear to the language of that rich man in hell, who reckoned his greateſt gain, to ly in his ſumptuous Fare, his gorgeous Apparrel, in his dogs, and in the pleaſant paſtime he had with them, what a mortifying diſcourſe might we hear from him, concerning the unprofitableneſs, and vanity of all theſe things? How would he decry, detrude and degrade them, even to very dung, when from them all, he cannot have ſo much as one drop of water from a finger to cool his tongue, in theſe ſcorching and tormenting flames? How pathetically would he commend, applaud and praiſe poor *Lazarus*, whom he ſo much once deſpiſed, for his wiſe choice of Godlineſs, as the greateſt gain, by which he is in *Abrahams* boſom in perfect bleſs, when himſelf is in caſeleſs and endleſs torments? How ſollicitous is he in ſending to his brethren, to declare to them the advantage of Godlineſs above all things in this world, wherein he, poor fool, placed his, and other ſuch fools, ſtill place their greateſt gain and happineſs? If ye will ſuffer your

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Consciences to speak out, will they not tell you that the way of Godliness is preferable to profanity, to formality, to meer morality and civility? that to pray is better then to restrain prayer before God? that sincerity in Religious Duties is preferable to hypocrisie? that humility is better then pride? that self-denyal is preferable to self-seeking, and self-pleasing, that Godly temperance, and sobriety are better then sensuality in sobriety and intemperance, *&c?* And if in your judgement, you assent to the truth of all this and be in your conscience convinced of it, what horrid guilt is it, and it will once be found, to be still following prophanity, intertaining lusts and idols, and lying by from the serious exercise of Godliness contrary to such assent and conviction, when there is somewhat within you that sideth, and taketh part with Godliness, as having the preference of and preheminence above all other things?

In prosecuting this *use* a little further, I shall show you the great Gain that cometh by Godliness, 1. In it's preventing these many evils that ungodlyness is attended with. 2*ly*. In the many good things that Godliness bringeth along with it. and for the *First* of these, *viz*. The ills and prejudices that attend ungodliness. which Godliness would keep off, we may instance in these *Three*, *First*, if we look thorow the *Scriptures*, we will find ungodliness, and prophanity to bring much temporal outward evil on men, it ruines Families, Cities, Countrey-sides, whole Nations and Kingdoms: It destroyed the Old World, *Sodom* and *Gommorah* with these other Cities of the Plain, when Godliness would have prevented

their destruction; It brings much Poverty, ...rship, Sickness and many other Judgements ...d Plagues on the Estates and Persons of Men, ...d Women; which if they did duely dread, and ...far loved themselves, as to prevent them, they ...ould studie Godliness, for (as it is *Prov.* 10. ...) *He that walketh uprightly, walketh surely, ...t he that perverteth his ways shall be made known*; ...s otherways so, to be a man that hath been no ...ue friend to himself: It's true, God doth some...imes though not ordinarly exercise men with ...re afflictions soveraignly, where he hath no ...pecial quarrel for sin, but he never plagues whole ...Nations, and but seldome particular persons; ...ut where there is a controversie; he hath this ...lways to say, *Thou hast procured these things to ...hy self*, and *thou hast destroyed thy self*. 2*ly*, Ungodlyness and prophanity bring on much inward evil on the *S*ouls and Consciences of Men and Women, much anxiety, disquiet, perplexity, vexation, anguish, terror and torture of mind, a gnawing worm in the Conscience, many sadly alarming and confounding challenges, which have their rise in carnal men from their ungodlyness, whereas the Godly man suitably exercised to godliness, *is kept in perfect peace, in peace, peace, he is not afrayed of evil tidings, his heart is fixed trusting in the Lord*, and having his mind stayed on him, amidst the greatest commotions, he is not much moved, but in a great measure calm, and composed; O! What a many galling and tormenting challenges are prevented by Godliness? As we may see in eminently Godly *Job*, who, under great trouble, and sharp exercise hath a great deal of inward quietness, as appears by what he

sayes

saves, *Chap.* 27. 6. *My righteousness I hold fast and will not let it go, my heart shall not reproach me while I live*; When any storm ariseth, helpeth to calm and lay it, and refresheth under it. 3*ly*. Ungodliness and profanity bring on eternal evils, *Tribulation and anguish, indignation and wrath upon every soul of man that doth evil*; O! how terrible will the appearance of ungodly men be, before the Tribunal of God? the coming of Christ will be to them, not as the shaddow of death, but as the substance, Soul and Heart of it: O! what a mass of evils is in these words.---*Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power*; and in these, *depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels?* Whereas Godliness yeelds peace and quietness in death, and boldness and confidence as to Judgement, and is waited with joy unspeakable, and full of glory, at Christs appearance: O! the refrigeration and refreshing, that will then come to the Godly from his presence. If in the *Second Place* we consider Godliness, in respect of what it positively brings along with it, the truth of what is said will further appear, though the truth is, we can more easily tell what Godliness removeth and freeth from, then what it hath in it, and bringeth with it, that quite transcends all expressions, yea, and conceptions also, For if it be *profitable for all things*, what does it, or can it want? And the good that it hath cannot be told; yet in some general heads we may touch upon, and take a little taste of the unexpressible advantages of it. 1, It hath temporall blessings attending it, in the measure God thinks

inks fit, *whatsoever the godly man doth shall* ...*sper, Psal.* 1. *The meek shall inherit the earth,* ...*atth.* 5. It may be the godly man hath not ...uch of the earth in possession, but he hath ...ight to it: hath, as it were, a lease of it; and ...ath peace and satisfaction in the use of what he ...njoyes, which the greatest men, that are not ...odly cannot have: And men will know this to ...e no little advantage, when once they begin to ...nquire into the nature of their right, and hold...ng of these externalls, *Thou shalt know* (sayes *Eli...has* to *Job Chap.* 5. 24.) *that thy tabernacle ...hall be in peace; and thou shalt visit thy habita...tion, and shalt not sin*; What an advantage is it ...o ly down, and rise up, to eat and drink, and ...ake use of all creature-comforts in peace, from ...he knowledge of our special right to them? yea, ...o have an inheritance to our Children after us? *The seed of the righteous shall be blessed, and they shall ...inherit the earth*; when not one word of Promise ...is spoken to the Seed of others; In the *second Command*, it's said, that the *Lord will have mercy ...on thousands of them that love him, and keep his com...mandments*; and do ye think it little, that the Godly man hath under the broad Seal of *Hea...ven*, the Promise of Gods care of him, and of his Seed? that if he were dying, he may leave God (to speak so) Tutor to his Children, yea, he may leave him as a Legacie and Portion to them, he being the Godly mans own Portion, he descends, as it were, to his Children, to be their Portion, when being helped to take him as such.

2*ly*, Godliness, as it is advantagious, in respect of a mans outward, so it is advantagious in re...spect of his inward condition, which this word

Contentment in the *Text* implies, the men of the World may poſſeſs far greater things in it; but if we look to Contentment, the poor godly man hath much, very much more? *I have learned* (ſaith the Apoſtle, *Phil.* 4.) *in every ſtate wherein I am, therewith to be content, I know how to be abaſed, and how to abound*, &c. It is a remarkable paſſage that we have in that meeting of the two Brothers, *Jacob* and *Eſau* mentioned, *Geneſ.* 33. Where *Eſau* meets *Jacob* with four hundred men (an evidence that he had much of the World) and being offer'd a conſiderable preſent by *Jacob*, he at firſt modeſtly refuſeth to accept of it, and ſayes to him, *I have enough*, the word in the original is *Rab*, *I have much*; but *Jacob* urging him to receive it at his hand, ſayes to him, *I have all*, for ſo the word *Col* in the *Hebrew* ſignifies; The Godly man is as quiet, well content, and ſatisfied with his condition, as if he had all things, having food and rayment. To this ſame purpoſe, the Apoſtle ſays, *Philip.* 4. 18. When he had ſome ſmal Supply of Charity from the Chriſtian *Philippians*, *I have all, I abound, I am full.* 3*ly*, Conſider him in his inward ſpiritual condition, in reference to the peace, comfort and joy of his Soul, he is ſometime filled with the joy of the Holy Ghoſt; *The Churches were edified, walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghoſt*; ſayes the divine Hiſtorian, *Acts* 9. And ſays our Lord, *John* 14. 23. *If any man love me, I will love him, and will manifeſt my ſelf unto him, and I and my father will come and make our abode with him*: O! ſuch refreſhing comforting & rejoycing company! there is more ſweet Soul-ſolace, and joy reſulting from the

the abode of the Father and Son, from fellowship with them, and from the lifted-up light of Gods countenance, in the exercise of Godliness, then Corn and Wine, even all the delights of the Sons of Men can possibly afford them: It hath another sort of purely sweet relish, then the most delicat earthly comforts have; It's great advantage appears eminently here. 4ly, Consider the advantage of Godliness, with respect to the Godly mans spiritual life; It keeps him fresh and green, and on the growing hand, and preserves him from decay, blasting and withering, whileas ungodliness makes men grow worse and worse; the Godly man, (*Psal.* 1.) *Is like a tree that is planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth his fruit in his season, and his leaf withers not, he is fat and flourishing, and brings forth fruit in old age*, *Psal.* 92. 5ly, If we shall consider beside all this, the advantage of Godliness, in respect of the life to come, here we turn into an ocean where words are swallowed up, *Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive it.* The greatness of the priviledge and advantage of the *Godlies being set apart for God himself* will clearly and conspicuously appear at that great and notable day of the Lord, when all the world will be Ranked on the right and left hand of the Judge; Who think ye will get the honour of the right hand that day? who, but the Godly, such as have been suitably exercised in the practice of the common duties of Christianitie, *when I was hungry*, (says he) *ye fed me; when I was naked, ye cloathed me; when I was a stranger, ye took me in*, &c. Is it possible to conceive to the full, or near to the full, what ad-

vantage is here? essay by faith to sist your selves before the Judge, and then consider, if there be not great gain, in being set on his right hand, to be saved from the pit, and in getting that heartsome word of welcome from Christs sweet mouth, *Come ye blessed of my father, and in being for ever with the Lord:* If all this, and infinitely much more, then we can speak of, be in Godliness, it is sure the greatest Gain; In this life it is very profitable, and in the life to come unconceivably so: And, if upon the other hand, ye could rightly conceive the horror that ungodly men will fall under how loud and shril their cryes & scrikes will be, when pressed from the unsupportable weight of the wrath of God, and from the pangs of an evil and tormenting Conscience, and when boasted away with that dreadful, *depart from me ye cursed*; there being no possibility *to see God without holiness*; while the Godlies peace and tranquillitie shall flow as a River, and as a mighty Stream, and when they shall have fulness of joy in his Presence, and pleasures for evermore at his right hand; what joy unspeakable, and full of Glory, the one will have at Christs coming, and what overwhelming sorrow of heart the other will then have; could ye aright conceive of the vast difference, that will then be betwixt the Godly, and Ungodly, ye would doubtless the more easily conceive the great advantage and gain of Godliness: Let me therefore seriously commend it unto you again and again; For *without all controversie as the mystery of godliness is great*, so is also the gain and advantage of it; In all the debates of the time wherein we live, hath there ever been one found, that had the confidence to

dare

dare to say down-right, that there is no gain in Godliness, or that there is no profit in serving the Almighty? though this, alas! be the language of the hearts and practice of many; Let me therefore, yet once more, commend it unto you, as unspeakably profitable, both here, and hereafter.

The 2d, *Use* Serves for Conviction, Expostulation and Reproof; If this be a truth, that *Godliness is great gain, and profitable to all things*; What is, or can be the reason, that it should be so little thought of, so much undervalued and neglected? If it be much more, infinitly much more to be Godly, then to be Rich, then to be great in the World, and to swime in it's delights, whence comes it to pass, that most men take so much pains to come by those, and so little to come by this, which is the very base and foundation of all true contentment? we are afraid, that many do not at all really believe, that either there is such a thing as Godliness, or that it is so gainful a thing; and we are sure that there are but very few, that are in their practice suited to such a belief; This great neglect of Godliness is the sin and shame of many professt Christians, and will eternally be both their shame and sorrow, and the ground of a sad Sentence against them, if the neglect be continued in: If ye could be prevailed with soberly and calmly to reason the matter with your selves, is there any thing that can justly compare, or compeat with Godliness? if not, then let it have the preference of, and the prehemminence above all other things: which leads me to speak a little to the commendation of it, *Comparatively*; *First*, compare it with the satisfaction

that is to be had in sin, (Alas! that sin should ever be compared with, let be preferred to Godliness!) ye that follow your lusts, and will not want an hours tipling, or laughing at a sinful Sport, an advantage in a bargain, though to your neighbours prejudice, that will not forbear a passionat word, if it should cost you your life, when that is over and by, will ye, can ye, dare ye say, that these have more advantage in them, then there is in sobriety, tenderness, meekness, patience in bearing with, and passing by an injury? Dare ye in your Conscience prefer those to these? dare ye say, that it is better to render evil for evil, then to render good for evil, and to let your moderation be known to all men? If you should think, or say so, would it not insinuat that hight of horrid blasphemie, that ye think the Devil to be better then God, and that the devil is to be served rather then God, Ah! shall any thing like this be once heard amongst Christians? sure then Godliness is much more advantagious then sin; Is there any promise made to ungodliness? is there one promise in all the Book of God to prophane persons? but doth not His Word speak good, and do good to them that walk uprightly? 2ly. Compare it with mens satisfaction in the World, and all the things of it, What are riches, honours, pleasures to Godliness? Are they capable of the titles, designations and characters, that the Scriptures give to Godliness? are they greatly gainful, even profitable to all things, as Godliness is? the gain of Godliness is both great, and sure, warranted by God himself to be so; the gain of it is unchangeable and unalterable, it's withall comprehensive of all needful and truely desirable good; and as it's

great

great & sure, so it's honourable gain, *For the righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance*; Godliness gives to men *a new name* that is *not written in the earth*, and makes them *to be pillars in the temple of God to go out no more*; which shall not be overturned, as those Pillars which men set up for perpetuating their names will all be: oftimes the men of the World are bowed and becked unto, and get low salutes from such as inwardly do in their hearts despise and contemn them; however, within a very little, their Grandeur will leave them, and will not go with them beyond the Grave, *Man that is in honour, and understands not, is like the beast that perisheth*; He that is honoured as a God to day, is tormented in hell to morrow with Devils; If ye would, in cold blood compare *Lazarus* and the *Rich*-man together, and seriously consider the end of both, eternal repose in the bosom of *Abraham* in Heaven, the end of the one, and extream un-interrupted and everlasting torment in hell to the other; is it possible, but ye must think Godly *Lazarus*, though in his lifetime poor, full of Sores licked by the others Dogs, had the advantage hugely beyond the rich man, notwithstanding his sumptuous Table, and gorgious Apparrel, and his great Retinue standing all about him, with cap in hand, along his short Life? And if, for all this, ye will not believe it, a few days will convince you, that this is the truth of God; and if so, what is the reason, that ye continue to wearie your selves with pursuing after vanity, and to neglect Godliness? 3*ly*. Compare it with that wherewith the Apostle compareth it here, *viz*. with all notional questions, disputs, intangling debates, with all literal know-

knowledge, light, and common Gifts, and it will be found to have the preference of them all; It is better to have a Servant, that out of Conscience to God will do his Dutie, and commend the way of God to his Master by his faithfulness therein when his back is turned, not with eye-service, as a man-pleaser, but in singleness of heart, as doing service to Christ, and not to man; then to have a Servant that hath a great Profession, much speculative Knowledge, with many other considerable Gifts and Abilities, that is not such; So it is much better for a privat Christian, that is a Land-labourer, a Handy-crafts-man, or a Merchant, that is in earnest, exercised to Godliness, that is frequent, and fervent in Prayer, and in other Duties of Gods Worship, and Christianity, & conscientious in the Duties of his particular calling; Then if for great abilities without Godliness he could start up into the Pulpit, and preach not only like other men, but like an Angel; It's better for Men to be serious in the practice of Godliness, then if they could be able (to speak so) for accomplishments of men to set up a new Religion every day, Subtilly and Sophistically to debate against all the grounds of faith, and to stop the mouths of maintainers thereof, yea, to refute all errors contrary to the Faith, by their meer School-learning, and Gifts; There is more Godliness, and so more true advantage in the right practice of the low, and common Duties of Religion, then in all these high flowen things: do ye think then, that Godliness and the gain thereof are small matters, towards which ye may carry indifferently, and unconcernedly? Or that ye run a small, and inconsiderable hazard, who neglect,

and

and care not for it, and are much sooner, and easilier satisfied as to your Godliness, then ye are, as to things of infinitely less moment? Alas! what gain ye though ye should gain the whole world, if ye lose your own Souls? O! foolish and desperatly mad exchange; Think seriously on the matter, all ye who slight serious Godliness, and content your selves with any form of it, what it will be to lose your Souls, to lose Heaven, and the love of God, and to fall under his wrath and curse, to sin your selves out of a capacity of all comfortable applications of any of all the Promises, and to bring upon your selves all the threatnings and curses that are in his Law? Life and Death are set before you, and the Lord puts the matter to your choice; And we may very confidently assert to you, that there is unspeakably great prejudice, and loss in ungodliness, as there is unspeakably great gain in the study of Godliness; we do again lay these two before you, Life Death, the love of God, and the curse of God, Heaven and Hell; If ye choose Life, ye must of necessity choose Holiness also; As *God shewes mercy to thousands of them that love him, and keep his commandments*; So he construeth neglect to keep his Commandments to be a *hateing* of him; for that in the *second command*, is by him opposed to loving of him, and keeping his Commands; ye who despise this greatly advantagious gain of Godliness, will make your selves and your posteritie miserable. Now tell me, when I have spoken all this, (which yet is but little of that which is in Godliness,) is it not a truth? Is it, think ye a meer phansie, a noveltie, or a controvertible thing? Is it not the plain will of God, the Practice of Piety, according to the word of

God, and to your understanding, as to a great part of it? and have ye not Consciences within you, which tell you, that there are many things relating to Godliness, that ye perform not, and much prophanity, contrary to it, that ye continue in? We beseech you then, for Christs sake, and for your Souls sake, to quite the one, and study the other, *That ye may grow up in him who is the head in all things*; And that ye may have the lineaments of his beautiful Image drawn vively upon you; If ye will do otherways, having a witnes of this truth within you, take heed that ye be not found fighting against God: It's a sad matter to see Men and Women that are called Christians, living, as if they were not to be countable to God; the thing we commend to you, is Godliness, and we propose, and press it not in our own name, but in the Name of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ; If ye make it your studie, it shall assuredly be well with you, ye shall reap the gain of it; if not, ye shall repent it (as we use to speak) at all the veins of your heart, at the day of Death, and in the day of Judgement; and ye shall then be made to think, and say, Godliness is great gain, when ye shall see the Godly carried to Heaven, and your selves banished from the presence of God, to the pit, because you neglected to make Godliness your study; the Godlie shall then be thought wise, though now they be looked on as fools, by the fools of the World; Sowing to the Spirit, shall have a rich and comfortable harvest, when sowing to the flesh shall have a hungry harvest, nothing being to be reaped of it but corruption; we pray you then yet again, as ye love the salvation of your immortal Souls, as ye would

enjoy

enjoy Gods bleſſed company for evermore, and be ſaved from the wrath to come, believe this truth, and keep it in the imagination of the thoughts of your hearts for ever, that *Godlineſs is great gain*, and let your practice be correſpondent to it; and the Lord himſelf, who can only do it effectually perſwade you ſo.

SERMON III.

1 *Timothy* 6. *Verſes* 6. 7. 8.

But Godlineſs with contentment is great gain. &c.

IN the fore-going Words, (as we ſhew) the Apoſtle hath been deſcribing a very dangerous ſort of Men, with whom the Church would be troubled; And the great Root whence the evil of theſe Men ſprang, is pointed at. *verſe* 5. *Suppoſing* (ſaith he) *gain to be godlineſs*, they levelled not things in their way towards the promoting of Godlineſs, but of their own Gain, that, and only that, whatever elſe they pretended, predominently influenced all their deſigns and motions; In oppoſition to which, he layes down ſomewhat more ſound, and ſolid, and alſo a more Chriſtian mean and help for the attaining of it, in the Words read, Gain (as if he had ſaid) is not Godlineſs, *but godlineſs is great gain*; and becauſe Gain bears great bulk in the eyes of Men, he puts in a word to commend Godlineſs, as a notable help to it; *Godlineſs* (ſaith he) *with contentment is*

great

great gain, for *we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we ſhall carry nothing out of it*; For as covetous and greedy as men are of worldly gain, a little might ſerve them, we came into the world weeping, naked and deſtitute of all things, and we ſhall ſo remove out of it; Men ſhall carry neither Gold nor Money, nor Apparel, nor Houſes, nor Lands with them; nay, ſaith the Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* 49. *v.* 17. *when men dye they ſhall carry nothing away, their glory ſhall not deſcend after them*; and therefore he concluds, *having food and rayment, let us therewith be content*; If we have things neceſſary, let us not trouble, nor cumber our ſelves in ſeeking after more; and he preſſes this dutie, by holding furth the prejudice and miſchief that attends the contrary evil, if men will needs be great, and reſolve, that they will be rich by any means, all the advantage that they have thereof, is, that *they fall into tentation, and a ſnare, and into many fooliſh and hurtful luſts*; Thus true contentment hath great advantage waiting on it, and mightily furthers Godlineſs; and covetouſneſs hath much prejudice and hurt with it, and leaves not a man till it drive him into ſome ſnare, into ſome one ſhameful evil or other, and in end *into deſtruction and perdition*; and he amplifieth this, *For the love of money*, (ſaith he) *is the root of all evil!*; If a man be once catched by, and carried away with love to Gain, there is hardly any temptation that he will not comply with, if it were even to embrace the groſſeſt errors, O! how infatuating is this love of money! how doth it make men, not only baſely to proſtitute their affections, and actions, but their very Light and Judgement,

Judgement, to whatever may contribute to the compassing of the gain thereof? We spoke somewhat before, to the commendation of Godliness; and would to God, that the reading of these words again and again might be blest, towards the riviting of the Faith of this great Truth, that the gain of Godliness is greater, infinitely greater then that of Gold and Gear.

That which we now would speak a little to is, That which is put in, and joyned with *Godliness*, and that is *Contentment*, which the Apostle *first* proposeth here as a duty to be studied, to wit, that a man should be content with his Lot; and then, 2*ly*. He holds out the great mean whereby it is attained, and that is, the practise of Godliness, These *two* go together hand in hand, *Godliness* and *Contentment*. 3*ly*. He removes an objection, which men would think to be unanswerable; Is it possible (will they be readie to say) that a man can be content, that hath but little, very little in the World? yes he may, (saith the Apostle on the matter,) *having food and rayment, let us therewith be content, for we brought nothing into this world, and we shall carrie nothing out*: Therefore (as if he had said) these *two, viz.* having little, and contentment may stand and agree well together. 4*ly*. He presseth this dutie, 1. From the excellent advantage that it brings with it, *It's great gain*, 2*ly*. From the great influence it hath on Godliness, it exceedingly furthers the same, which covetousness mightily mars, and obstructs. 3*ly*. From the many prejudices that discontenting covetousness, and covetous discontentment brings with it; And all this, that he may hold forth, and establish in the

practice

practice of the People of God, the bleſt, and beautiful conjunction of theſe *two*, *Godlineſs* and *Contentment*; which, as they cannot be ſeparated nor diſjoyned, ſo the amiable conjunction of them would make a ſweetly ſatisfying, and ſolacious life to us, whatever our outward condition ſhould fall to be in the World, even a little Heaven upon Earth.

The *Doctrine* we draw from the Words, is this, *That contentment with a preſent Lot, whatever it be, is not only a neceſſary, but a very commendable, and profitable dutie incumbent on Chriſtians*; or thus, *The ſtudie of Godlineſs would, in the practice of the People of God, carry along with it contentment*; Theſe *two* are put together by the Holy Ghoſt; and the Apoſtle here layeth it down, *Firſt*, by way of Doctrine, *Godlineſs with contentment is great gain*; And then by way of Exhortation, *having food and rayment, let us therewith be content*; And the ſame Exhortation is repeated, *Heb.* 13. 5. *Let your converſation be without covetouſneſs, and be content with ſuch things as ye have.*

We ſhall, in the *firſt* place, a little explain the *Doctrine*, by ſhewing, 1, what Contentment is, And *2dly*, By holding out the advantages of it; and then, in the further proſecution of it, touch upon the other *Doctrines*, that riſe from the following Words. *Firſt* then, as for what *Contentment* is, it is in general, of that large extent, as to leave the Perſon in quietneſs, calmneſs, and compoſure of mind, ſweetly, and ſatisfyedly acquieſcing in Gods diſpenſation, whatever it be, thinking whatever he meets with to be beſt, whether it be more or leſs in outward things.

More

more *particularly*, we may consider it, as consisting in these *Four*, 1. In a mans moderat, sober, and bounded inclinations, desires and designs, in reference to himself, as to all the things of this World; and so it is opposed to all inordinat desires of a change of his present Lot, and keeps him from *seeking great things for himself*; for he that *will be rich*, is opposed to him that is content, as *Covetousness* and *Contentment*, are opposed, *Heb.* 13. 5. Contentment is a mans silent reverencing of Gods way with him, and restrains him from inordinat, and prepostrous pressing after more then he hath, or does acquire, in a lawful way; (for lawful labour, or honest labour in a lawful way, is not opposed to Contentment) In the following of his lawful Calling, he is holily indifferent, as to Gain; for he doth it as his duttie, and not mainly to further his advantage or gain; and whether he get a good bargain, or an ill, a better or worse, he is not much moved, nor much up or down with either. 2*ly*. It consists in mens pleasant, quiet and calm submission to divine disposal, in pursuing any lawful mean, or way in providing for the supplie of what they stand in need of; and in this respect, it is opposed to Carking care, which the Apostle forbids, *Phil.* 4. When he says, *be careful for nothing*; And our Lord, when he wills his Disciples, *Matth. 6. 22. To take no thought for the morrow*; It is soberly to follow the duties of our respective lawful Callings, without being cuttingly, or carkingly careful, vexed, or anxious, what be the success of them; for it's impossible but such care will put, and keep in a sort of fum and feaver, in a great distemper of Spirit,

if

if it were but in providing for, or in making ready of a dinner or Supper. 3*ly*. It consists in mens silent acquiescing, and reverent adoring of God, in what he carves out to them, actually for the present; whether it be little or much, more or less, they are content; *having food and rayment*, (saith the Apostle) *let us be therewith content*: And *Heb.* 13. 5. *Be content with such things as ye have*: with a little and ill readied Dinner, as well, as when ye have a Feast, as to the inward frame of the mind; with contempt and unjust reproach, as with reput and esteem; though Christians are not to be senseless, when they meet with reproach, yet they should silently submit to, and reverence God in it; *I have learned in every state wherein I am* (saith the Apostle) *therewith to be content*; when I meet with disgrace, it marrs not my contentment; and when I meet with respect, it discomposes me not; as I am not lift up with the one, so not cast down with the other; Contentment teacheth to walk evenly under every dispensation. 4*ly*. It consists in a calm serene tranquillity of mind, that not only frets not at Gods dispensations, but gives a positive assent to them, as being well satisfied with them; O! the sweetly serene frame of Soul, that makes a Christian according to his measure, to say with the Apostle, *Phil.* 4. *I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content; I know both how to be abased, and how to abound, every where, and in all things I am instructed, both to be full, and to be hungry, both to abound, and to suffer need*; who also says, *v.* 18. *I have all, I abound I am full*; I have a mind as contented, as to the inward tranquillitie of it, in the want of things, as in the

abounding

abounding of them; And it was this which put him in case to say, 2 Cor. 6. *That he walked with God, and behaved faithfully in his Ministry, by honour, and dishonour, by evil report, and good report; as a deceiver, yet true; as unknown, yet well known; as dying, and behold alive; as chastned and not killed; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things;* He had an equal composed mind, having as much contentment, whether he had less or more of the things of the World, as if he had enjoyed, and been Proprietor, or Master of them all (if there be any seeming, or real coincidency betwixt some of these *four*, yet they will be found to be some way diversified at least) *Secondly*, As for the Advantages of such a frame of Soul; I take it foregranted, that whoever shall, through Grace, engadge in the pursuit of it, will be easily prevailled with, to set their Seal to this Truth, that contentment is, as a necessary, so a most profitable, and advantagious dutie; sure, if to be satisfied with little, as well as with much, with less as well as with more be an advantage, this is: many have used several means to come at contentment, and yet have not attained it; *Solomon* tells us, *Eccles.* 2. That he had taken a tryal of all things under the Sun, that he might find it, but could not; *the Eye* (saith he) *is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear with hearing*! fine Buildings, Gardens, Orchards, multitudes of Servants, variety of Musical Instruments, heaps of Silver and Gold cannot yeeld it; but Contentment is found in Godliness only: The advantage of contentment springing from this Fountain, appears, 1. In respect of the evil it keeps off men; whether

it be the evil of Sin, O! what paſſion, bitterne lying, ſtealing, Swearing, &c. doth it preve and keep off? or the evil of trouble; what fluct atings, what tormentings, toſſings, and agita ons of thoughts, what hangings in ſuſpence, meteors in the Air, what vexation and angui doth it keep off? What diſquieting, and exce ciating, covetings of, and longings for th and that, and the other thing, in the World do it prevent? *many ſay* (ſaith the Pſalmiſt) *wh will ſhew us any good*? but ſaith he for himſelf and the reſt of the Godly, as the only truly con tented company in all the World, *Lord liſt tho up the light of thy countenance upon us; thou ha put gladneſs in my heart, more then in the time that their corn and wine abound*; O! the vaſt diffe rence that there is betwixt thoſe *many*, and thoſe few; what un-ſatisfied deſires have the many for *any good*, and what ſatisfying, and chearing contentment have the *few* in the chief good? a contented mind is ſtayed and fixed, pleaſant and cheerful, in nothing careful. 2*ly*. The advantage of it may be ſeen, in reſpect of the abound ant inward peace it hath with it, ſuch a peace that keeps and guards, yea, in a manner garriſons the heart and mind, that no outward thing can much diſturb it, changes, and more croſs, or more ſmiling events, do not much brangle it, ſuch a man *is not afraid of evil tidings, his heart is fixed, truſting in the Lord*. 3*ly*. The advantage of it appears not only by it's calming, compoſing, and quieting of mens Spirits, under all the diſpenſations of God, but alſo, by it's making them Maſters of what they have, be it little or much, and of themſelves in the ſuitable free uſe thereof;

ſo

so that *they are not brought under the power of it*; without which, a man is not master of what he hath, though never so much, it rather masters him; *This is all that a man hath of his labour under the Sun, to rejoyce in his portion*; and it's one of these many evils, that *Solomon seeth under the Sun*; *that a man to whom God hath given riches wealth and honour, so that he wants nothing for his soul of all that he desireth, yet God giveth him not power to eat thereof*; he hath not contentment; studie more this divine art of contentment with your Lot, since all mens projects and pains are in order to contentment, which they will never come by, but in Gods way.

2dly, *Observe*, (Which is a notable, and non-such help to this) *That there is no contentment without Godliness*; or thus, *There is no such solid, sure and compendious way to attain contentment, as to be seriously exercised to godliness*; Therefore is it said here, That *godliness with contentment is great gain*; And if we look through the Scriptures, we will alwayes find, that it is the Godly Man that is the contented man; It was Godly *Paul*, who learned this great Lesson, that was taught this divine Art, *Phil.* 4. and 2 *Cor.* 6. Where we see how he arived at this hight of contentment, *Giving* (saith he) *no offence in any thing, but in all things approving our selves as the Ministers of Christ, in much patience*, &c. and then follows his contentment, *having nothing, yet possessing all things*; and the reason is clear, because a mans contentment not consisting in the things which he possesseth, but in the right frame of his mind: There is nothing that can put and keep him in such a frame but Godliness: But for further

further clearing, and confirming this, ye may consider, that Godliness hath influence on contentment these, and such other ways, *First*, it bounds a mans desires, and designs, by discovering to him the vanity, emptiness, and unsatisfactoriness of all Creature-comforts, and so sobers the mans Spirit in the pursuit of them, saying to him, as the Lord did to *Baruch* by *Jeremiah*, Chap. 45. *Seeks thou great things for thy self, seek them not*; and the word that follows the Text is, *having food and rayment, let us be therewith content*. It doth (I say) so bound his desires and designs, that though he have not so many thousands, nor such and such fine things in the world he is notwithstanding content: 2*ly*. It moderats a mans affections in using the things of the world as by the former way, it keeps him from being anxious and carkingly careful, in seeking and pursuing after them; So by this way, it makes him quiet and satisfied in the use, and enjoyment of them; whereas, where contentment win at by Godliness is wanting, the man is both vexed and perplexed, in seeking, and without satisfaction, in enjoying, because he seeks, and expects more from these things then he finds; but the Godly man (as it is 1 *Cor*. 7. *v*. 29, 30.) *weeps, as though he wept not, rejoyces, as though he rejoyced not, buyes, as though he possessed not, and useth this world, as not abusing it*; Godliness is that *living water* spoken of by our Lord, *John* 4. 13. *which, when a man drinketh, he doth not thirst again*; It quencheth these disquieting droughtie desires after the things of the World, which all men naturallie have, in so far as it is in exercise, 3*ly*. It takes the mans affections off these things, and sets them

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the thing in his hand, if not more; He can *boldly ſay, the Lord is my helper*; and *the Lord is my ſhepherd, I ſhall not want*; and ſo quiet and conten
himſelf; and there being no caſe nor condition
the Godly man can be in, but there is a Promiſe
for it, and Godlineſs giving acceſs and right to
the Promiſe, and the exerciſe of Godlineſs giving the Promiſe (as it were) a new and freſh
Luſtre, he reſts ſatisfied in the Promiſe; and
having, or wanting doth not diſturb his peace,
and contentment; He knowes, that if it be needful, this pain or ſickneſs, this or the other Croſs
will be removed, this or the other want will be
ſupplied; and if it continue, that it will be for
his beſt, according to that vaſtly comprehenſive
word, *Rom.* 8. *v.* 28. *All things work together for good to them that love God, and are the called according to his purpoſe*; And what needs more?
The Godly Man may boldy take hold of the Promiſe, but none other can do ſo warrantablie; for
though Godlineſs be not the meritorious cauſe of
Gods either making, or of his making out of the
Promiſe

omise, yet he hath knit these two together, d hath given the Godly Man a right to the Pro- ise, which none other hath: And therefore, if love and would be at contentment, love Godli- s, and seriously exercise your selves to it: 5ly, odliness hath powerful influence on the morti- ation of a mans lusts, and of a fretting mal- ntented humour, amongst the rest: whence, I pray) ariseth the want of contentment of ind? but from some unmortified lust within, as mes tells us, when he sayes, *Chap.* 4. *whence me wars and fightings among you? are they not om your lusts that war in your members?* but where odliness is in exercise, it checks, keeps down, d subdues these, it bears down Pride, and binds Passion; when corruption is ready to rise; tting, impatience, and discontent to break out, odliness will make a man say with *Eli. It is the rd*; And this makes him, as being thus fisted fore God, that he dare not give way to his cor- ption: The great thing that disquiets being ways somewhat that is sinful; Godliness pre- nts, or restrains and mortifies that which leads discontentment, and keeps the mind calme.

If the matter be so then, let me exhort you, the *first* place, to study Godliness, if ever ye ould have a contented life here, and a fully satis- ing and joyful life hereafter; without which ye eed never look after, nor expect true contentment. 2ly. To suspect your selves that are Godly, hat there is a faillure or decay, as to it's lively xercise, when your life begins to grow anxious, eetful, and discontented; the Lord says to *Ba- ch, Jer.* 45. When he cryes out, *Wo is me me, the Lord hath added grief to my sorrow, I*

fainted

fainted in my ſighing, and I find no reſt, thou a ſeeking great things for thy ſelf, ſeek them not Hold thee content, if thou get thy life for a prey our bitterneſs, fretting and diſcouragement com from ſome unmortified, or little mortified Luſt whereas Godlineſs more effectually ſubduing Luſts hath a holy calmneſs, compoſure, and ſtayedneſ of Spirit with it; and when ever the Godly grow remiſs in the exerciſe of Godlineſs, they then grow very ill to pleaſe, to be much out of humour (to ſpeak ſo) and to be fretful, and diſcontent almoſt at every trifle.

In the *Third* Place, from the Apoſtes meeting with this Objection, What? is it poſſible, that contentment, and a little of the World can conſiſt together? yes, ſayes he, very well, *If we have food and rayment, let us therewith be content*; from this (I ſay) *Obſerve, That a man may have contentment with little in the world, and where a poor mean outward condition in the world is, it needs not mar contentment*: What a poor condition in the world was *Paul*, 2 *Cor.6.* and yet in what a contented condition was he? and how ſweetly contented profeſſeth he himſelf to be, *Philip.* 4. When he is hungry, in want, and abaſed, as well as when he is full, and abounds? and how ſatisfiedlie doth he proclaim, *v.* 18. *I have all, and abound, I am full*; Why, what's the matter? he had received a little Supply from the Charitie of the *Philippians*, *Having* (ſayeth he) *received of Epaphroditus, the things that were ſent from you*, O! So very much as he makes of little, when in this bleſſed frame! and accordingly he exhorts the Chriſtian *Hebrews*, *Chap.* 13. (intimating thereby the compatibility of them) *Let your converſation*

...ation be without covetousness; and be content ...h such things as you have: The *Reasons* of the ...trine are, 1. Because Contentment being ...gracious inward calm, and tranquillity of the ...d; as none of these outward things in the ...rld can much, if at all, augment it; So the ...st of them, can but very little, if any thing at ... diminish it; It is not much in the World ... contents, nor little in it that discontents, ...ere the heart is set upon, and exercised unto ...dliness; As Christ tells us, *Luke* 12. 15. *A ...s life consists not in the abundance of the things ... he possesseth*; A man may have much, and no ...ntentment; and but very little, and yet much ...tentment. 2*ly*. Because the Godly mans ...tentment, consists not so much in what he ...h in hand, as in what he hath in the Promise, ...his right to the Promise, and to the little thing ... he hath, and in the right and sanctified use ...; A Godly man may be as well content, and ...arful (to speak so) in supping his Meal-por...e, and in eating his piece of Broun-bread, ...king a drink of water after it; When, without ...y other cloathing, then of Sheeps-skins, and ...oats-skins, and when, without any other house ...er his head, then the Cannopy of the Firma...nt of Heaven; be as quiet, and in as little fear ... anxiety, as he that is served at his Table, with ...riety of delicat Dishes, that hath variable suits ...costly Apparel, and dwells in a strong Castle, ... in a well-guarded Palace; yea, and much ...re; because he hath the right use of what he ...joyeth, a right to the Promise with Gods bles...g, the hope of and out-gate, and of Heaven ...last.

And therefore, as the *use* of this Point, 1. mistake not *Contentment*, as if none could have it, except such as have abundance of the things of this World, there may be much of it, where there is but very little of the World, Food and Rayment, though but very course, will content a godly man; and his content is not marred by a great want of these things that the men of the world place their happiness in. 2*ly*. Think less of the World, and all things in it, considering, that when the men of the World have with much difficulty and toil, climbed up to the highest Pinacle of their Prospects and Designs, they stand there, but in a very slippery place, not fully satisfied, but rather filled with Inquietude, with tormenting fears, and carking cares; Like unto that *Sicilian* Tyrrant *Dionysius*, who being flattered by a base Sycophant *Damocles*, because of his Riches and Glory, invited him to a *Sumptuous* Feast, where he was habited, and served as a King, and caused a naked Sword be hung over him, by an horse-hair, when he sat at Table, with the sharp point of it just above his head, so that the wretch could not for fear eat any of the Dainties that were before him, thereby representing to him, as by a vive Emblem, the vanity and vexation of his own, so much applauded and magnified state and splendour: Give not way to anxiety, and carking care about these things, neither suspend your Contentment till you get this, and that, and the other thing in the World, but knit your Contentment to Godliness, yoke your selves presently in the exercise of it, without delaying, so much as an hour; God hath not hung the Believers Contentment and Satisfaction on earthly things, but hath

given

n him a more ſolid Foundation to build it up. God (ſays the Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* 48.) *is our refuge, ſtrength, a very preſent help in trouble; therefore will not fear, though the earth be removed, and mountains be caſt into the midſt of the Sea; is a river, the ſtreams whereof make glad the of God.* It's only the practice of Godlineſs, uſting God, and waiting on him, ſeeking Communion with him in his Ordinances, &c. yeilds Contentment; and what elſe, I pray, or can be a mans Contentment in that day, n the Heavens above ſhall melt, and the Earth, the works therein, ſhall be all in a flame, d about him, and when Gold and Silver ſhal urned into droſs? Or what Contentment will, an ſuch things poſſibly bring to the poor man, n grim death ſhall ſternly look him in the e? It was thought unreaſonable, even among e *Heathens*, that their Contentment ſhould be d in theſe poor, low and empty outward gs, how much more ſhould it be thought ſo ng *Chriſtians*?

In the *Fourth* place, (as a great motive to ntentment) *Obſerve, That Contentment is very ſary for all that would ſucceed, and make pro- in Godlineſs, and diſcontentment verie preju- ial, and obſtructive thereunto*; Therefore the y Ghoſt, joyns theſe two together here, to w that the one of them helps, and furthers the her, and that a defect in any one of them, is ſtructive to the other; he hath not true Con- tment, neither can he have, that is not exer- d to Godlineſs: and he that hath nor Con- tment, cannot promove in Godlineſs; *The love money is the root of all evil*, the lover whereof

cannot make progreſs in Piety; but Contentment promoves Godlineſs, and keeps from many ſnares. Therefore the Apoſtle exhorts, *Heb.* 13. *Let your converſation be without covetouſneſs, and be content with ſuch things as ye have*; He offers, and preſcribes Contentment, as a mean of victory over Covetouſneſs; So that Contentment is not only a Dutie, but a mean to help in other Duties; will or can a man, think ye, pray to any purpoſe, that is diſcontent? It's impoſſible; it mars his liberty and boldneſs; neither can the diſcontented man heartily Praiſe, for praiſe flowes from a ſatisfied mind, and that the diſcontented man wants; he cannot read, hear, nor meditat to purpoſe, for his mind is confuſed; Diſcontentment being a weakning of the mind, indiſpoſeth for the exerciſe of Godlineſs, and ſo diſtracteth and diſcompoſeth the mans Spirit, that it hath no ſtrength for, nor ſuitable inclination to duties of Godlineſs.

And therefore, as the *uſe* of this in a word. 1. Be exhorted, as ye love, and would promove in Godlineſs, to ſtudy Contentment in all things; to carry about with you a calm and quiet mind; Look upon, and admit of theſe *two*, as motives and helps one to another; that ye may be more Godly, ſtudy more Contentment; and that ye may be more contented, be more exerciſed to Godlineſs; let them go hand in hand together; and indeed neither of them will go alone, but they muſt needs go together; And O! ſo *comely* as they *are in going*? Many evils wait on diſcontent: it makes men much uſeleſs, both to themſelves and others. 2*ly*. Be exhorted, as to be aware of diſcontentment in your ſelves, ſo to take heed

that ye do not sinfully discontent others, and make them heavie; ye may, by so doing, obstruct Godliness, both in your selves, and in them; There is hardly any thing that hath been a greater snare, and more prejudicial in these times, then discontent and fretting; and it concerns us much to walk so, as it may not be fostered and cherished: We exhort you then, earnestly to study Contentment, and do crave it from you, as ye love and desire to promove your own good, and the good of others; and that ye learn a dexterous way of making the best use of every thing; if this desirable thing Contentment may be attained, study the way to come at it, study to be in case to be-speak your selves thus, hath God joyned Contentment with Godliness, and shall I not exercise my self to Godliness, and particularly, to be denyed, and mortified, as I ought, to all things of the World, that I may reap the great gain of Godliness, and particularly in this divine Contentment? and if fretting, and discontent prevail over me, it will greatly obstruct my progress in Godliness, and leave me in greater indisposition, in the end of Duties, then when I began, shall I not then studie Contentment with my Lot, whatever it be? Shall I not more then ever love and prize the connexion betwixt Contentment and Godliness? and shall I not through Grace, more throughly believe this great Truth, that *Godliness with contentment is great gain*? Let it stand as an eternal, and unchangeable veritie, like a great and unmoveable Rock in the midst of the Sea, by beating against which, all the waves of the worlds contradictory false-apprehensions, and foolish phantasies may break themselves.

A

SERMON.

on 2 *Timothy*. *Chap*. 3. Verse 5

Having a form of godliness, but denying the pow thereof.

THere is nothing of greater Momen Concern, and Consequence to Me and Women, then to know distinc ly, to be well acquainted with, a to be throughly serious in the practi of Godliness; *For godliness is great gain, havi the promise of the life that now is, and of th which is to come*; And yet, alas! There is n any thing wherein the greatest part of them ar more miserably mistaken; Some, and these no a few, so very grosly mistake it, that they utter ly undervalue and despise it, seeing no excellency nor worth in it, why they should either prize or pursue after it; whereby it comes to passe that they are so far from making any near and close approaches to the practice and power there of, that they do not so much as care for the form of it: There are a great many others, who, though they pretend, and make profession of some regard for Godliness, yet deplorably, and no less dangerously mistake the nature of it, which

which makes them to halve and counterfit it, and to fit down with the form, whilst they deny the power of it. Amongst many evils of the last Times, which the Apostle would have Christians forwarned of, armed and guarded against, this is one, and a very considerable one, that many shall be found to halve, personat, and counterfit Godliness, to take up the form, and practically to deny the power thereof; Nay, it is his great scope here, to shew that Godliness may, and will be thus wofully mistaken, and to guard Believers against all such mistakes of it.

He proposeth this matter, by way of prophesy and prediction, that *In the last days perillous times shall come*; insinuating thereby, that the nearer those last days draw to an end, these words will have their more full, direct, and clear accomplishment; for *Paul* and *Timothy* themselves lived in the last days, and yet notwithstanding, this is a Prophesie of evils that were then to come: But you will readily Demand, what are these perillous times, or what is it that makes them perillous? I Answer, it is not outward trouble and persecution so much, that makes them so, though that will not be wanting; as it is the great abounding of iniquitie amongst professed Christians; The fountain of all these evils and abominations, mentioned here by the Apostle, to come to pass in the last days, is discovered, *men shall be lovers of their own selves*; and then, as so many foul streams, that flow from this corrupt and unclean fountain, *They shall be covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemous, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false-accusers, incontinent, fearce, despisers of them that are good traitors*

traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more then lovers of God. And yet this is very strange, and even stupendious, and makes the perril the greater, that men shall endeavour to vail and cover, to palliat, and plaister over, and to honest, as it were, all these detestable evils and abominable villanies, with a form of Godliness, when, in the mean time, they palpably thus deny the power thereof. There is a word of warning subjoyned, *from such turn away*, from such as under the mask and visard of Godliness follow their own particular and selfish designs and under the specious pretext of love to God and his People, are in effect, only lovers of their own selves.

If any shall Ask, as some very readily will, how can such gross evils possibly consist with a form of Godliness? I Answer, 1. That a form of Godliness is taken here in a very large sense, taking in all that pretends any the least, and most remote regard, or relation to Christ, with which all, or most of these evils may some way consist. 2*ly*, These evils are not practised, but under the pretext of some good, or in order to the furthering of some really, or seeming good, and honest design. 3*ly*, Though these evils be gross, and abominable in the sight of God, yet they are such as may consist with a form of Godliness, in the sight of most men; such persons may have a form of Godliness in that respect, and yet be lovers of themselves, proud, boasters, heady, high-minded, *&c.* It is therefore not so great a wonder, that the Apostle supposeth such to lye lurking and lurking under a form and shew of Godliness, so as they make the times perilous, and make it some-

somewhat difficult to discern, and discover them.

Several things might be pertinently observed from the context, as namely, 1. That there is nothing more perilous to the People of God, than when sinful and selfish designs, and practises come cloathed with a shew, and pretext of Godliness, when Deformation comes under the cloak of Reformation.

2ly, That Satan will mightily bestir himself in the last dayes, to bring this great perril on the Church of God.

3ly, That there may a great many gross evils, lurk under the specious pretext of Religion, and Godliness; there may be a fair shew of Godliness, and yet a great deal of selfe-love, pride, headiness, high-mindedness, covetousness, &c. latent under it.

But not insisting in these, we come close to the words of our *Text*, wherein, *First*, we have something conceded, or granted, as to these men, *viz.* That *they have a forme of Godliness*, that they have the outside, or external part, the the shape, likeness, or similitude of Godliness, the external profession, and outward form of it; They may read the Scripture, hear the Word preached, pray, confer on a spiritual Subject, &c. Though they be altogether void of the Truth of Religion, and of the power of Godliness, they may have the form and appearance of it, something that looks like it, and hath some resemblance of it; as fairding, and paint looks like native beauty, and Guilding like true Gold, so halved, false, and hypocritical Religion, may look somewhat like to that which is true, real

real and sincere. 2*ly*. We have somewhat de-
nyed concerning them, and that is the power o
Godliness; which they are destitute of, *But de-
nying the power thereof*; As the Apostle speaks o
that sort of men, *Tit.* 1. 16. *They profess that th
know God, but in works they deny him*; In wor
they confess him, but in practise they deny him
they (as I said) have the shew, and counterf
of Religion, something looking like it, but are u
terly without the power of it, so that their prac
ice declares them, notwithstanding their pro
fession, to be denyers of it.

The *First* Point of *Doctrine* that we draw fro
the Words, is, *That where real and true godlin
is, it hath always power with it*; For clearin
whereof, we would speak a little to these *Tw
1*. What is meant by *the power of godliness*. 2
Somewhat towards the Proof and Confirmatio
of the Doctrine: To which I shall only premi
these *two* Words, 1. That we take it fore-grante
that there is an external part, or form of Reli
gion, and an inward Power. 2*ly*. That there
a false, counterfit and empty shew of Religion
or Godliness, commonly called Hypocrisie, Di
sembling, and Deceitful Dealing with God, con
demned in the Scribes, and Pharisees, and others
and a real true Godliness, that is not only a shew
but also substance, not profession and form only
but also *Power*, which is the main and principa
thing therein, for the want whereof, these Hypo
crites are here Noted, and Condemned, notwith
standing their having had the form thereof. *Firs
then*, by Power, we understand these *Two*, 1.
power of Dominion and Command; And thus rea
Godliness hath a Power to rule sway, and com
man

mand a man; Power is so taken, 1 *Cor.* 6. 12. When the Apostle says, *All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any thing*; to be under the Power of any thing, is to be under it's Dominion and Command; So to be under the Power of Sin, is to be captivated by it, to have it for a Master, and to be ruled and commanded by it; even so, to be under the power of Godliness, is to be under it's Dominion, so that it swayes, orders, directs, rules and commands the man; *Know ye not*, (saith the Apostle, *Rom.* 6. 16.) *to whom ye yield your selves servants to obey, his servants ye are, to whom ye obey, whether it be of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?* That which is there called *obedience to righteousness*, is here called *Godliness*; So that to be under the power of Godliness is heartily to obey it, to be obedient to the Doctrine of the Gospel, to *the truth which is after godliness* (as it's called, *Tit.* 1. *v.* 1.) and that *from the very heart*, *v.* 17. and 19. *ply*. By Power we mean efficacy, so that true Godliness hath an efficacy to inable to perform, and make practicable what it enjoyns and commands; Thus saith the Apostle, 1 *Cor.* 2. 4. *My speech, and my preaching was not with enticing words of mens wisdom, but in demonstration of the spirit, and of power*; And 1 *Cor.* 4. 20. *The kingdom of God is not in word but in power*; Where there is power, there is efficacy; there is an effectualness, through the power of God, that accompanieth, when the Lord pleaseth the preaching of the Gospel; And as to preaching, some men may have fine and flourishing expressions without efficacy, whilst others may have a more rude and unpolished stile

Language, yet with a great deal of more Power and efficacy; So there is a form of Godliness, that never effectually shews it self in practise, or in the Mortification of any Lust; But where true Godliness is, it commands, exercises dominion, and reigns over a man, it directs and commands him, and he gives willing and hearty obedience to it; It not only brings him under the profession of Religion, and makes him to adorn that profession, by a visible good conversation, but it works him inwardly at the heart, and hath an efficacy in it, to the subduing of sin in him.

As for the *2d.* Thing proposed, to be spoken to, *viz.* The Proof and Confirmation of the *Doctrine*, *That where true Godliness is, it hath power with it*; I shall only pitch on these *two* Reasons, for proving of it; The *first* whereof is, That where true Godliness is, there the Spirit is, and where the Spirit is, there is Power; *God hath not*, (says the Apostle, 2 *Tim.* 1. 7.) *given us the Spirit of fear, but of love, of power, and of a sound mind*; The Spirit brings along with him, Power, inward Life and Efficacy; *2dly.* Where true Godliness is, there is Faith, and Faith hath Power with it; There is an exceeding greatness of mighty Power, that worketh effectually in them that believe, *Ephes.* 1. 19. Faith hath a power in it, enabling to overcome the World, 1. *John* 3. *v.* 4. It hath a power to purifie the heart, *Acts* 15. 9. Yea, all things are possible to him that believeth, *Mark* 9. 22. Faith hath (if I may so speak) an Instrumental omnipotency taking hold of, and closing with the Almighty power of God, it removeth, and hurleth out of the way, the greatest and highest mountains of difficulty, that

that stand before it, and maketh them, as it were, become a Plain; So that the Believer, when lively, and vigorous in the exercise of his Faith, on the Lord Jesus, that strong one, on whom his help is laid, may humbly say with the Apostle, *Phil.* 4. 13. *I can do all things, through Christ strengthning me,* though *I can of my self, and without him do nothing*; The strength of Christ improven by it, makes it wonderfully, powerful.

The *use* of it serves for tryal; would ye know then, whether ye have true Godliness in very deed, here is a notable mark and evidence of it; for its not every one that pretends to Godliness, that really hath it; but where it is in truth, it hath power with it, even a manifold power; 1. It hath a *convincing* Power, that where the hearts of men and women are naturally proud, and stout against God, and have a kind of skurf on them, Godliness sets an edge on the Word, and makes it pierce deeply, and strick through, it fixeth convictions, and makes them sink, and the person to take kindly with them, bringing his heart under deep impresses of the aw and dread of God. 2*ly*. It hath a *renewing*, changing and transforming power, such a power, that makes a new Creature, old things to pass away, and all things to become new, as the Apostle speaks, 2 *Cor.* 5. 17. 3*ly*. It hath a *restraining* power, it keeps in (to say so) the horns of Corruptions, and Lusts, and suffers them not to reign, and exercise dominion, as they had wont to do, *Rom.* 6. *v.* 14. 4*ly*. It hath a *constraining* Power, impelling, and pousling forward to that which is good, & well-pleasing in the sight of God; Its impossible, where Godliness is in power, that men can be un-

con-

concerned in their duty; It makes them yi
themselves to be servants unto righteousness, a
is, *Rom.* 6. It leads captive high thoughts, a
imaginations to the obedience of Christ, 2 C
&c, *v.* 25. It makes the man, that he dare n
he will not, he cannot allowedly at least, re
any commanded duty, no more then he dare,
can dwell contentedly with, any known sin,
makes him, that as he dare not put away any
Gods Commandments from him, so neither d
he regard any iniquity in his heart, *Psal.* 18.
and *Psal.* 66. 18. 5*ly*. It hath a *Mortifyi*
Power, as to all things whatsoever, without e
ception, that offer to compeat, and rival it wi
precious Jesus Christ in the persons esteem,
blakens and damps the beauty, and splendor
them all in this competition, it detruds them
the very lowest degree of baseness, and vilene
so that in comparison of him, they are solid
reckoned to be but as loss and dung; Thus t
Apostle expresseth himself, *Phil.* 3. *These thi*
that were gain to me, I counted loss for Christ; y
doubtless I count all things to be but loss for t
excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lo
&c. It breakes off the Contentment (such as
was) and complacency in Idols, that sometim
men had, and makes them, in holy indignatio
to say, *What have we any more to do with Idols*
get you hence. 6*ly*. It hath a *heart-quieting*, calm
ing, composing and fixing Power, which th
meer form of Godliness never hath, but leave
the man still reeling, and unfixt; *It's a goo*
thing (saith the Apostle, *Heb.* 13.) *that th*
heart be established with grace, not with meats
Grace that is opposed to Meats, that is to questi-
ons

ns, and debates about meats, and other such things, that have a shew of Godliness, and do not profit these who are occupyed about them; Grace, I say, only establisheth the heart. If we could be prevailed with, to lay our selves to this rule, and to examine our Godliness, according to these evidences, it would be found that there is but little true Godliness amongst us; Ah, where is the power of Godliness! and yet wherever true Godliness is, it hath power with it, and this is of very large extent, reaching a mans frame and walk, his thoughts, words and actions, yea, his very looks some way, it made *Job* to make a covenant with his eyes; It orders all, and that not by fits, and at starts, but constantly, as to his desire, design and honest endeavour, in some measure; And if at any time, the influence of it's power be not felt, or weakned, that becomes his burden and affliction, when, in any, the least measure at himself.

The *Second point of Doctrine*, from the words is, *as there is real Godliness that hath power, so there is a form, and hypocritical shew of Godliness without the power, life and substance thereof, under which form and shew persons may go a very great length*: The current of the Scriptures, and the doleful experience of many, who think themselves to be somewhat, to be Godly, when yet they are nothing really so, abundantly prove this, and put it beyond all reach of rational contradiction, or debate; How many, alas! are like to whited Tombs, and painted Sepulchres, like to those spoken of, *Psal.* 78. 30. Who flatter God with their lips, and lie unto him with their tongues, their hearts not being right with God,

God, nor stedfast in his Covenant? I say, Persons may, under the forme, shew and appear of Godliness, without the power of it, go a great, even an astonishing length; which may be reduced to these *Eight*, or *Nine* Steps, or Heads. 1. As to Profession. 2. As to Gifts. 3. As to a blameless outward Conversation, in good measure. 4. As to External Duties of Religion. 5. As to a name, and good account amongst the Godly, founded in a great part upon the *Four* former, and resulting from them. 6. As to some inward work on their Spirits. 7. As to the appearance, and resemblance of the sanctifying, and saving Graces of the Spirit. 8. As to Suffering, in a suffering time. 9. As to dying in a sort of peace, and assurance of their Salvation, but ill grounded.

First, As to *Profession*, They may have a very fair, florid, lustering and splendid one, even a lamp of it, shining a long time, it may be to the very dying day, as the foolish Virgins spoken of *Matth.* 25. Who associated with the wise ones, were undiscovered to be without oyl of true Grace by their fellow professors, till the coming of the Bridegroom, made the un-expected and surprizing discovery.

2*ly* As to *Gifts*, they may have a good measure of literal & speculative knowledge of God, of Christ, and of other principles of Religion, and Mysteries of the Kingdom of God: as these spoken of, 2 *Pet.* 2. 20. No doubt had; As the false Apostles mentioned, 2 *Cor.* 11. had, who, in that respect, looked like *Angels of light*, and *as the Ministers of Christ*; As these Teachers had, who vayed with the great Apostle *Paul* himself in preach-

preaching, and out of envy ſtudied to out-ſhine him, ſpoken of, *Phil.* 1. As ſeveral of the *Jews*; mentioned, *Rom.* 2. v. 18, 19, 20. had, *Who had a form of knowledge of the truth of the Law*, A formed Idea, and ſyſtem of the Truths ſcattered up and down the Law, collected, as it were, in one Body, who *knew Gods will, and approved*, or *differenced things that are excellent, being inſtructed out of the Law*; As theſe illuminats, ſpoken of, *Heb.* 6. doubtleſs, in a great meaſure had; And as the Apoſtle ſuppoſeth, profeſſors of Religion may have, who yet are without a principle of true gracious love to God, and to the Truths which they profeſs the belief of, 1 *Cor.* 13. The knowledge of ſuch is not lively, ſpiritually experimental, humbling, transforming, and truly practical. They may have a notable Gift of utterance, and expreſſing their knowledge, and conceptions of the Truths which they know, for the edification of others, as theſe *Jews* had of the Law, (and others may proportionably have of the Goſpel) *Who were inſtructers of the fooliſh, and teachers of babes*, of ſuch as were far inferiour to themſelves in theſe things; and, as theſe had whom the Apoſtle ſuppoſeth to ſpeak as it were, *with the tongues of men, and of angels*, that is, eloquently, elegantly and graciouſly. They may have (which is of great affinity with, and a branch of the former) a choice Gift of Converſe on ſpiritual purpoſes, to the edification of others, as no doubt theſe ſame perſons had. They may have a gift, yea, a great gift of Prayer, as *Judas* no doubt had, and of Preaching alſo, and as many other graceleſs Perſons have been known to have had; For there is a Gift, as

well

as well as the Grace of Prayer, a meer Gift, well as the gracious exercise of a Gift; O! h pathetically will some men pray, and seem to and mount aloft to Heaven in prayer, in the ercise of a meer Gift, unsanctified from comm assistance, and by a pair of wings, made only self: such are great strangers to the experimen knowledge, of the Soul-humbling, and abas straitnings, and of the Soul-refreshing liberti proceeding from the absence, and partial wi drawment, and from the special presen and assistance of the Spirit of Grace and Supp cations, wherewith the truly Godly, who pr from the Grace of the Spirit, are acquainted wi whereof the Apostle speaks, in the name of t Godly, *Rom.* 8. 26. *Likewise the spirit also hel eth our infirmities, for we know not what we shou pray for as we ought, but the Spirit it self make intercession for us with groanings that cannot be u tered*: They are great strangers to the observin of the absence of the Spirit of Grace, and t Soul-trouble, on that account, even when, in th more ready, easie, and plausible exercise of common Gift: They are great strangers to pray ing in the Holy Ghost, and in the name of Christ in conscienscious obedience to his Command, in his strength, with predominant respect to his glo ry, and with a believing look to his Mediation, to his Satisfaction, and Intercession, as the great ground of the acceptation of their Persons and Prayers, even their best said Prayers: They are great strangers to the exercise of kindly sorrow, and humiliation, for grieving the Spirit of Grace and Supplications by their self-seeking, in Prayer, and in the exercise of a Gift: Finally, they are

are great strangers to looking at liberty, to interceed with God in prayer for themselves, as the rebounding (to speak so) of Christs Intercession for them; and when they cannot interceed for themselves, as they ought, but are under bonds; to being eased, and refreshed from the believing consideration of his Intercession for them: These, and such other Gifts, as they may be in a greater measure in some, that have only a forme of Godliness, then they are in many of the truly Godly, so where they are, they are very pleasing and tickling to the persons themselves, and not a little taking with others: And meer Gifts, without sanctifying Grace, very readily, and ordinarily puff up, as the Apostle speaks of Knowledge, 1 *Cor.* 8. 1. And the greater they be, they puffe up the more.

3*ly*. As to the External Duties of Religion, and of the worship of God, both ordinary and extraordinary; they may go about them, they may pray in secret, and in their families, they may read the Scriptures, wait punctualy on the Ordinances, in the house, in the streets, and in the wilderness, as many in the Gospel say to the Lord, they did; they may externally sanctifie the Sabbath, they may fast often, even twice a week, as the Pharisee sayeth he did, *Luk.* 18. And many of these they may go about, with a moral seriousness, as they did, who are said, *Psal.* 78. *v.* 34. To have *returned, and enquired early after God*. That is diligently, and someway seriously, and concernedly; nay, they may have some tickling pleasure, and delight in them, as these are said to have had, in approaching to God, *Isai.* 58. *v.* 2.

4*ly*. As

4*ly*. As to their visible Conversation; It may be in a good measure blameless, as *Paul* says he was, while a *Jew*, and before his Conversion, *Phil.* 3. 6. As the Pharisees were, who, as to their outward Conversation were, as whited Sepulchres, and painted Tombs, very fair, fine and beautiful to look to, *Matth.* 23. 27. And as those were of whom the Apostle *Peter* speaks, 2. *Pet. Chap.* 2. *v.* 20. *who had escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of the Lord, and Saviour Jesus Christ*; On whom, as to the cleansing of their outward Conversation, and the escaping of the external acts of lusts, though still alive, and unsubdued in their hearts, the knowledge of Christ had prevailed; and also to the making of them, (as it is *v.* 18.) *clean to escape from them who live in error*, from their blasphemous opinions, and gross practises, into a profession of the truth, and a suitableness of outward Conversation thereunto; whilest in the mean time there was no inward saving change, made on the heart, from the love of secret lusts, to the sincere love of Christ, and of his Truth. The former of which, without the latter may be occasioned, by the bright shining Light, spiritual state, and majesty of the Truth, which is in nothing contrary to Natures light, however it may, in several things transcend its reach; by the commending beauty, and loveliness of holiness, radiantly shining in the Conversation of some of its professors; by the convincing power of the example of more serious and tender Christians, and by some external conveniences, and advantages, that sometimes, though not often nor ordinarily attend a profession of truth, and holiness, which

when

they are wanting, plead for the greater charity to them, who are remarkably changed for the better in their practise and conversation, when there is little external encouragement, or no outward advantages, yea, when on the contrary, there are many outward discouragements, and prejudices attending the profession of the Truth, according to Godliness.

Sly. As to a great Name, an high esteem and repute among others, on account of such a profession, of such gifts, of such duties of Religion, and of such a Conversation; as the Ministers and Members of the Church of *Sardis*, *Rev.* 3. *v.* 1. *had a name to live*, some of whom, at least whatever others might be, were quite dead; they had great Name in the other Churches, probably on the fore-mentioned accounts, that they were not only living, but also lively Christians, but very unsuitable to so large a name, Christ pronouncing them to be *dead*, some of them (as I said) to be altogether dead, and others of them not to be lively; such readily seek after a name of Religion, and when they have got it, are satisfied with, and sit down on it, without suitable seriousness, in looking after the thing; though a name, an empty name of Religion, be but a poor and pitiful business; What though men and women should have the largest Testimonial drawn up, in the most ample forme, and subscribed by the hands of all the most eminent, godly and discerning Ministers, and privat Christians of the City, or Countrey-side wherein they live, what will it signifie, or avail, if Christs hand be not at it, or if he shall subscribe after all their subscriptions

ſcriptions, a plain contradiction to, and a down-right denyal of what they affirme? His Judgement and Teſtimony being infallible, and always according to truth, will weaken and quite enervat the contrary Teſtimony of all the World; *It's a ſmal thing* (as the Apoſtle ſays 1 *Cor.* 4.) *to be judged of men*, This way, or that way by a judgement of Approbation, or of Condemnation, ſince we cannot ſimply ſtand by the one, nor fall by the other, neither can the one help us, if he condemn, nor the other hurt us, if he approve; every one muſt ſtand or fall eternally, according to Chriſts Teſtimony; *not he that commends himſelf* (by proportion nor he whom others commend) *but he whom God commends is approven*: It's true we ought to be tender of our own *good name, which is better then precious ointment*; and to endeavour, *to commend our ſelves to every mans Conſcience in the ſight of God*; & to look carefully, that by our unchriſtian carriage, we bring not any ſtain, or blot on the profeſſion of his preeious Name, nor give any the leaſt occaſion to the adverſary, to blaſpheme, or ſpeak evil; yet it is as true, that we ſhould do none of theſe things mainly, if at all on deſign, to gain a name to our ſelves, but in order to the glorifying of God, the adorning of the Doctrine of the Goſpel, and the convincing, gaining and edifying of others; we ought not to hunt after a name, nor to commend our ſelves, to the good word of others, rather then to their Conſciences: Alas! there hath been, and ſtill is, too much affecting, and ſeeking after a name, amongſt the Chriſtians of this greatly ſelf-ſeeking generation; we are too well pleaſed, too much tickled, and taken with it,

when

n we get it, and too much troubled when we
t it, and often, in our destempers, more
n we are with the want, or with a very great
t of the thing, and substance of Religion it
Happy are they, who make it their great busi-
s to approve themselves to God, and to com-
nd themselves to every mans Conscience, in
sight of God, yet so, as to be denyed, and
ided to every mans commendation, and good
rd; that are well satisfyed, to be found in the
y to Heaven, though the sound of their feet
ould not be much heard by the way; that love
lurk, and hide, but when they are called to
pear, and shew themselves, resembling hereby,
a great measure, blessed Jesus, of whom we
ght to be followers, as dear Children, and of
hom it is said, that *He did not cry, neither was*
s voice heard in the streets, he loved not to make
oise; and to whom a name of Religion is a bur-
n, and affliction, when they judge the inward
xercise of their Souls, and the tenderness of
heir walk before God, doth not carry a just pro-
portion to that Name; and when the lining, (to
peak so) and the Inner half, is not fully as broad
s the outer-half. There is also too great a rea-
lineſs, and easiness, rashly to give large names to
others, by our superlative, and hyperbolick Testi-
monies, and commendations, whereby many are
not a little hurt, and prejudged; as several of
the Christians of the Church of *Sardis*, very pro-
bably were, being thereby tempted to think too
well of themselves, and some way to sit down on
their great name, without suitable seeking after
the thing, or much of it; And this we often do
(to say so) for as good again, though, it may be,

no-

not so designedly, and directly, yet on the matter that by our commending of others, they may commend us, and that their commendation of us may have the more weight: O! when shall we once look more seriously and concernedly after real Religion and Godliness, and be less concerned, and more holily indifferent, as to the Name? When shall our movings about, and our appearings in, and for Religion, be the native and necessary, the kindly and unconstrained results of the power of the Life of the Grace of God within?

6ly. As to somewhat of an internal work upon their Spirits, 1. There may be some jealousies, fears and doubts about their Salvation, and eternal state, putting on to propose questions concerning the same, and that not meerly for the fashion, or in way of complement, though these fears are often suffered to evanish, and these doubts and questions to ly without a throughly satisfying answer, and solution; As it was with the young man, mentioned in the Gospel, who came to Christ, and asked, *Good master, what shall I do to be saved, and to inherit eternal life?* and *what lacke I yet?* And who was very sad at the answer Christ gave, & at the duty he enjoyned him; there having been a considerable struggle betwixt some lothness to leave Christ, and great lothness to leave the World, but domining love to the World carrying it in the competition, away he goes, and leaves his ease of Conscience in the hollow. 2ly. There may be a good measure of illumination, even super-natural, though but by a common work of the Spirit, not at all sanctifying, as was in these spoken of, *Heb. 6. 3ly.*

There

here may be conviction of sin, and that consider-
y deep, as was in *Judas*. 4*ly*. There may be
me terror, and horror of Conscience, accompany-
, or flowing from that conviction, and from the
prehensions of Judgement, and Wrath to come,
was in *Felix*, though but a *Pagan*, and without a
m of Godliness, and may be much more so in vi-
Church-members, and no doubt was in *Judas*,
hen in despare he became *felo de se*, and his own
ecutioner; & how many such dreadful fits of hor-
have seized on, even most profane, dissolut and
ofligat persons, who have oftener then once, drunk
d debosht them away; But ah! poor wretches,
ey will recurre, and come back on them
th redoubled irresistable force and violence.
here may be some sort of sorrow, and remorse
, as highly dangerous to themselves, as was in *Saul*,
udas, and others such. 6*ly*. There may be a con-
derable firm assent of the Judgement to Scripture
uths; which temporary Faith necessarily presup-
oseth; nay, very Divels themselves, have it, beyond
ny men living under Gospel-ordinances, and
nnot withhold it. 7*ly*. There may be consider-
le stirrings & ricklings of affections, in strange fits
d flashes of joy, at hearing, and some way receiv-
g of the Word, as in these, in the parable of the
ower, who received the Word with joy, and be-
ved for a time; And there may, no doubt (as
perience confirms) be proportionably fits of sad-
, heaviness, and weeping, at hearing of the Word,
d both may be without any savingor, sanctifying
ork, the hardness, & stoniness of the heart remain-
g still untaken away. 8*ly*. They may have some
ght, light, transient and evanishing gusts, and tast-
gs of *the good word of God, of the heavenly gift, and*

of the powers of the life to come. As these are suppo
to have, *Heb.* 6. With some faint and languid de
to die the death of the Righteous, & to have t
end like theirs, without any cordial and sincere
to the way leading to that end, as *Balaam* had.
There may be considerable striving and strug
betwixt the illightned Conscience, and the cor
affections, the one saying, the man should fo
Christ and Religion, and the other saying, he m
not leave the World, nor abandon this, and the o
lusts; where the corrupt affections carry it, tho
not always without some reluctation, and this
look very like, & pass under the construction
that spiritual Combat that is in the Regenerat, betw
the Flesh and the Spirit, the renewed, and unrene
ed part, though it be in many respects, vastly differ
therefrom. 10*ly*. There may be a sort of tickling
evanishing delight in attendance on Ordinances
was in these mentioned, *Isai.* 58. *v.* 2. and *E*
33. *v.* 31, 32.
11*ly*. As to the appearance, and resemblance
the saving Graces of the Spirit of God; whereof th
are but few, if any, which may not be personated
Men and Women, having only a form of Godlin
and who are closs & latent Hypocrites: As for i
stance, 1. The Grace of *Faith*, may be personate
as it is by the temporary Believer, who hears t
word with joy, and believes for a season; (which
not so to be understood, as if temporary Faith diffe
ed nothing from true justifying, and savi
Faith, but only as to duration, they differ certainly
kind, as might be made easily to appear;) So th
are said to believe, *Psal.* 78. *v.* 35. and *Psal.* 105.
12. Whose heart was not right with God, and wh
did what is not consistent with saving Faith. 2*ly*.
Lo

love to God and Christ, and to fellowship with him, may be personated, as may be gathered from, *Ephes.* 6. *v.* last, and from, *Isai.* 58. *v.* 2. 3*ly.* The *Hope* of heaven, and of the Glory of the Lord may be personated; as no doubt it is, by them who have only temporary Faith, the nature of their Hope being suited to the nature of their Faith, both without a root of habitual saving Grace in the Soul; And these who get a taste of the powers of the life to come, may have a Hope suited to such a taste. 4*ly. Zeal* for God may be personated, as it was by *Jehu*, and by these spoken of, *Rom* 10. *v.* 2. 5*ly. Mortification*, may be personated, as it was in these mentioned by the Apostle, 2 *Peter* 2. That escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of the Lord Jesus. A natural aversion, and restraint from the out-breakings of some Lusts, by a common work of the Spirit, may look very like mortifying Grace. 6*ly. Patient waiting* upon, *& sweet submission* to the will of God, in doubtful events, even in matters of moment, may be personated. So it was in *Joab*, 2 *Sam.* 10. *v.* 11. 12. 7*ly. Humble self-denyal* may be personated, as it was in *Saul*, 1 *Sam.* 10. *v.* 22, 23. and 11. *v.* 13. 8*ly. Gracious sincerity* may be personated, by moral sincerity, which makes a man to mean what he saith, professeth, or doth without any known dissimulation; Thus was in the *Pagan Abimelech*, in a great measure, who saith to God, *in the integrity of my heart have I done this*, to which the Lord beareth witness; and no doubt it may be in persons who have only a form of Godliness; And belike, was in *Jehu* for the time, when he said to *Jonadab*, *come see my zeal for the Lord of Hosts*; And also, in those spoken of, *Psal.* 78. *v.* 36. 37. who, very probably meant as they said for the time, and did not wittingly dissemble, though they did real-

ly, and before God, in respect of close and latent hy-
pocrisie, of whom therefore it's said, that *they flat-*
tered him with their lips, and lyed to him with their
tongues. 9*ly.* Tenderness, that very precious Grace
may be personated; As it was in *Joab*, 1 *Cor.* 21.
3. and 6. Who, as to that particular act, quit out-
striped gracious and tender *David.*

8*ly.* As to suffering; They may go a very con-
derable length, even to give their bodies to be bur-
ler be to suffer lower and lesser things, In a good cau-
and in professing the truth without a principal
true saving Grace, and of sincere love to Jesus Christ
as the Apostle insinuats, men may do, 1 *Cor.* 13. 1.
9*ly.* As to dying with a sort of peace, of an ill groun-
ed, and deluding assurance of Heaven and Salvati-
from which there was no driving of them, while th-
lived; and so they may go down to the Grave w-
a lie in their right-hand, and perish under a So-
murthering delusion, never awakning out of the
dream, till the sparks of the flame of the Wrath
God take hold of them, and drive them out of th-
fools Paradice; as is plainly insinuated, concern-
these spoken of, *Mat.* 7. *v.* 22, 23. & *Luk.* 13. *v.* 25, 26, 2

This is a very great, and even stupendious leng-
that Hypocrites, and such as have a form of God-
ness, without the power of it may go; where I ha-
not defined, & determined what is the *ultimum qu-*
so, or the very utmost length they may go, neith-
hath God, in the Scripture done, for any thing
know, having in deep wisdom forborn to do it,
design to provock his own People, to diligent end-
avours, on good grounds, to make sure, they are
length, that no Hypocrite can go; and that they a-
not only *almost*, but *altogether* Christians: I do n-
deny, but readily grant, that he hath in his Word, r-

march

arches, betwixt the Hypocrite, and the found Be-
ever; betwixt the meer form, and the power of
odliness, betwixt the only almost, & the altogether
hristian; The one never sincerely and heartily re-
eiveth *whole* Christ, nor gives himself *wholly* to Christ;
ver cordially embraceth, and closeth with him, for
ll ends, intents and purposes, for which he offereth
imself to Sinners in the Gospel; nor maketh an ho-
est, intire, absolute, universal, unreserved, unexcep-
ned, and sincerely designed and endeavour, irrever-
ible surrender, and resignation of himself to him, to
e saved, and guided by him, on his own terms, and
n his own way; as the other doth; yet I say still, he
ath not precisely told us, what is the very yonder-
ost step, that the Hypocrite may go, so as he cannot
o one step further, though he hath told us, that he
ever goes such a length: Neither have I said, that
ll these forementioned things do meet together in
ne, and the self-same person, that is without a prin-
ipal of true saving Grace, and of the power of God-
iness; some of them may be in one, & others of them
n another; fewer of them, in some; & moe, yea, many
f them in others; whatever be, or be not in this mat-
er, *de facto*, & eventually, yet it may be it will not be
very easie convincingly to demonstrat, that it is
tterly impossible, that most, if not all of them, may
e in one and the same such person, since every one
f them may be where there is no principle of spe-
ial saving Grace; but their meeting most, or all of
hem, in any one such Person, is very rare, if ever at
ll it come to pass.

The *use* of this *Doctrine* serves for exhortation to
ou all, as to let this Truth sink deep into your hearts,
hat there is a form of Godliness, without Power, as
here is a form of it with Power, and to learn well

to discern the difference betwixt the one and the other; So not to sit down with every thing that looks like Godliness; for though ye have the form, it is not at all safe to rest on it, We design not to cry down a form, but would have you not to separat the Form from the Power, nor to prefer the Form to the Power. For further clearing, and pressing of this *use*, We shall *First*, give you some *Marks*, and Evidences of Godliness that hath Power with the Form. *2dly*. Some Marks of the Form of Godliness without Power.

As to the *First*, The Form of Godliness joyned with the Power, hath, among others, these *First* Marks. 1. Much Self-denyednes, whereas a meer Form hath Self-love as it's Fountain; the Power of it puts a man to deny himself, and his own Righteousness, and humbles him under the conviction, and sense of his sin and misery; It puts him to be denyed to the inordinat love of himself, and to submit himself in all things to the will of God; to be denyed to his own contentment and satisfaction, and to seek that in God; It makes him love God more than his pleasure, profit or preferment, or any thing else in the World. *2dly*. It puts on to the practise of the Duties, that are more inward and spiritual, as well as of these that are more outward, it puts on to the exercise of Repentance, of Faith in Christ, of Mortification of Lusts, of Self-searching and examination, & the like; because the Life of Religion consists mainly in these. *3dly*. It puts on to the exercise of Graces, as well as of Duties; A natural Conscience may put on to Duties, & to frequency in them; But Godliness in Power puts also to the exercise of Graces, as of Patience, Submission, Humility, Sincerity, Love to God, & to the Saints, &c. These are fruits of the Spirit, and of the new Creature, Members of the new Man,

n, which by their acting evidence Life. 2ly. The
er of Godliness shews it self, in the right manner
going about Duties; It makes men pray & praise
the Spirit, to sorrow for sin after a Godly sort, to hear
Word so, as to be edified by it, &c. 3ly. The power
Godliness puts the Christian as much to oppose,
wrestle against defects, & short-comings in his
ritual grouth, as against the sins, that directly let
hinder it; it causeth trouble and grief to him,
well for defects in sincerity, as for more gross sins,
the weakness of Faith, & coldness of Love, as
ell as for out-breaking evils; to dread and de-
cat hypocrisie counterfiting of Religion, as well
more palpable profanity; Where Godliness bears
le by its Power, it commands holiness, in all manner
conversation, in conformity to the Holiness of God,
will challenge for the least defect, & short-coming.
4ly. As for Marks of the Form of Godliness, with-
t the Power; They may be gathered from the
ntraries of the former; But more particularly you
y take these. 1. It evidenceth the Form without
e Power, when persons are much more in outward,
an inward Duties, or when inward Duties are ne-
lected, as Prayer in Secret, self-searching, mortify-
g of hidden lusts, and the like; when men are much
ore, in what may keep up the shew, and appearance
Religion, than in what may advance the substance
it, by seeking to have the heart further renewed;
he man that rests on a Form, is satisfied, and goes
ay with it, without serious reflections on what ecli-
eth him; Such a one will guard against drunkenness,
and the breakings out of his unruly passion, who ne-
er seriously laid to heart, the sinfulness of these evils,
or mourned for their having sometimes prevailed
over him; the sincere man differs from him in this,

that

that he repents; as well for such evils, when they are fall, as he endeavours to guard against the out-breakings of them, for time to come, he looks at original corruption, as the Fountain, & mourns over that, as *David* did. *Psal.* 51. 2*dly*. The formal man makes it his business, to rickle, and tear up high superstructurs of profession, and of the externals of Religion, but never lays a sure foundation; he is as one that would be at sowing of much Seed, but takes no care to wide it, or to remove what may obstruct its growth: whereas the sincere man digs deep, that he may lay a sure foundation, & that, what he builds on it, may stand, when the storm comes; and carefully, and seasonably takes out wides, that hinder the grouth of what he hath sowed. 3*dly*. It evidenceth a Form without Power, when men are taken up with the matter, and external part of Duty, & are challenged for omissions, whilest in the meantime, they look not after the right manner of doing Duty, nor are challenged for what is amiss in that, or for want of following Spiritual Fruits; a formal man will readily be challenged if he neglect Prayer, before he go abroad, especially if he meet with any cross providence that day; when the sincere man will be challenged for his formal lifeless, & whole-hearted way of going about his Duty: the formal man will be challenged, if he go not to Church, but takes not heed how he hears; but the sincere man, by the power of Godliness, is not only prone to come to Church, to hear Sermon, but is also challenged, if the Word be not mixed with Faith, in the hearing of it, if he do not lay it up in his heart, and practise it in his life, he would as well reap the benefit of the Duty, as be at it; he loves not to run as uncertain, nor to fight as one beating the air, whereas the formal man is well pleased, & satisfied, if he go about

the

external duties. 4ly It evidenceth a form of God-
ness, when men are all for action, & doing in the ex-
rnals of Religion, but not at all for suffering, but
owerful Godliness commends, and commands both,
at we should speak & do for Christ, and be also rea-
y to suffer for him, as we shall be called to it: It's an
il token, when a man can speak for Christ, but can-
ot hear of suffering for him; can reprove, but can
no means suffer a reproof; can go about Duties,
hen there is no hazard, but quite shrinks, & sits up
hen trouble appears; As it is said in the parable of
he seed that was sown on stony ground, it sprung
p but withered when the heat of persecution came.
ly. It is an evidence of a Form without power, when
en, in their Religious performances keep their
arts from all exercise of kindly humiliation, and
om what may put them out of conceit with them-
lves; Such readily level in all they do, at one of these
wo, or at both, to be esteemed by others, and to
ave an estimation of themselves; hence it is, that
ey are here called, *proud, boasters, high-minded*; they
annot comport with any thing in Godliness, that
osseth their humour and corrupt inclination; What,
y they, we are men, and not beasts, we scorn to
e trampled on, and made slaves; in a word, whatever
hey do, (as I said) they can suffer nothing; if
here be any thing that may gain a name to them,
hey have hearts, heads and hands for that, but they
now not what it is to suffer an injury; whereas the
ower of Godliness, according to the Scripture, in-
ucts the Christian, when he is smitten on the one
heek, to hold up the other.

The 3d. *point of Doctrine*, from the Words, is,
*That men do far more ordinarly, and readily take up
the form, then seek after the Power of Godliness, and
desire*

desire more to seem to be Religious and Godly then to be it in very deed; There are these two Reasons, among others, why it is so; 1. The Form, Shew and appearance of Godliness appears to them desirable; Hence it comes, that few in the visible Church are so grosse prophane, but they have a sort of desire to be accounted Godly; they will not deny, that God is good, & therefore must some way grant, that it is good to be like him, and they would be esteemed such; Thus many come to Church, wait on Ordinances, and go about external duties of Religion, because these have some likeness unto, and some resemblance of Godliness; They cannot endure to be accounted Athiests, whilst in the mean time they can as little endure the Power of Godliness: This leads to the 2d *Reason*, which is, That the Form of Godliness is much more easie than the Power of it, & may be got bowed towards a compliance with mens lusts, which the Power can never be; Its always checking and reproving for what is amiss, it is always crossing corrupt inclinations, & humours, it will by no means suffer them to be quiet, & at ease in any thing that is displeasing to God; it's like a healing-plaister, that first sharply bits and corrods before it heal; but the Form will admit of undue latitudes, and like Oyl, smooths the sore a little, whilst it is in the meantime under-cutting, and putrifying; nay, love to mens lusts, will put them on to take up the Form of Religion, and at the same time keep them back, and fright them from the Power of it; It was the same inordinat love to self-interest, that made *Jehu* so zealous, and forward in destroying *Baal*, that made him abstain from sincere worshipping of the true God according to his own Commandments, and to cleave to the sin of *Jeroboam*; So self-love will bring a man to Church, & also make him stop his ear to the most

power-

werful perswasions, to quit and abandon his lusts.
The use of the *Doctrine* serves to exhort and
s all to a very diligent and accurat search of
mselves, least any who are disposed to think
they have been long students of Godliness,
found to take the Form, for the Power of it;
sad mistake, and yet not unusual, there be-
but few in these days, who have not some
m of Godliness, and yet with most, it is as such
uffers them and their lusts to live quietly to-
her: I shall offer a few considerations from
Text, to perswade you to a narrow search of
r selves, which may also be as so many marks;
Consider, that it is (as I said) much more
e, to come at the Form, than at the Power
Godliness; and if your godliness be such as
u have easily come by, and get maintained
hout any difficulty, it speaks you shroudly to
yet under a meer Form of it; It's hard to get
o or three, a very few in a Congregation,
ought under the power of Godliness, but it is
easie matter, to bring the generality under
Form of it; There may be a profest general
bjection to the Gospel, which would, in so far
cherished; but ye would take heed, that ye
not deceive and cheat your own Souls by it;
have all some Form, but, alas! this preached
spel is fruitless, as to many of you; ye
most think it needless, to speak any thing to
u, to the commendation of Christ, of Faith in
m, and of holiness, these being truths, ye know
ell enough; O! what a desirable thing would
be, that ye could be as easiely brought under the
ower of Godliness, as ye are brought to the form
it; but alas, many of you, never observed a

difference

difference betwixt the Form and the Power, [illegible] by look on both as one; if there were no other ground, this might make you suspect your selves as having only a Form without the Power of Godliness. A 2d. Consideration may be taken from the time wherein this Form of Godliness without Power will be most prevalent, and that is, *in the last days* of the Gospel, even these wherein we now live, for the words are a propheſie of the evils that shall abound in these dayes; if this ought not this to alarm you, to a serious trial of your selves, whether ye have the Form of Godliness with, or without power; Since that is much verified in our days, it calls you to dread it and be jealous of your selves. If it shall be asked here, what is the Reason, why a meer Form of Godliness aboundeth so much in these last days? *Answer.* 1. It may proceed from Satans subtilty, who finding, because of the brightly shining light of the Gospel, to the shaming profanity that he cannot get men detained in gross profanity, he gives them, as it were, a dispensation to take on a Form of Religon, without the Power by which they are still keept under his power and often, with more difficulty rescued from it then if they were openly profane; when he cannot prevail with many of you to be gross swearers, lyars, drunkards, cheats, *&c.* He labours to make you meer Formalists, and Hypocrites; And O how many gross Hypocrites are they, who are ready to cry out against others, as Hypocrites? He will suffer you to go to Church, but will, as it were, whisper you in the ear, take as little of the Preaching as you please, and no more than serves your turn, and may keep up your empty Form,

and

by this means he prevails more, than by his
ations to profanity, with not a few, at least,
ely. It may proceed from mens strong comply-
ers with their selfish inclinations, and designs,
ounting Gain to be Godliness; which designs
y consist with the Form, though not with the
er of Godliness; And great things being pro-
fied of, and promised to the Church, in the
es days, and men naturally loving more exter-
accidents of Grandeur, Pomp and advantage,
a fancied temporal Kingdom of the Saints, than
Substance and Power of Godliness it self, they
ready to take on a Form and shew of it, as
itleing them to a share of that imaginary King-
m. 3dly, It may proceed from the righteous
dgement of God, who, when men and women
on a Form, gives them up to a Form, *that*
ring, they may hear, and not understand, and that
ng, they may see, and not perceive, &c. As it
Isai. 6. Which is very palpably fulfilled in
se days. 3dly. For pressing to an exact search
your selves, consider, that the Religion of ma-
is, wofully consistent with the grose evils reck-
ed up here; try if yours be so, are not many of
u lovers of your own selves? who never loath-
but always loved, and thought well of your
ves; are ye not covetous, proud, boasters,
ce and covenant-breakers, making little, or no
nscience, to keep your word and engagements,
ecially to God, &c. These speak your God-
ess to be but a Form: Make due application of
ese things, and examine your selves according
them; There hath hardly been any genera-
on since *Paul* wrot, on which these evils might
more justly charged, than on this; it's a Ge-

neration

neration that pretends highly to Godliness, ah! are there not many, who, under this cl... and vifors are heady, high-minded, proud, co... tous, lovers of pleasures, more than lovers... God, &c. So that we know not well whethe... make these motives to self-searching, or grou... of Conviction, and Lamentation; ye wo... readily be huffy at, and even despite such as wo... say to many of you, that ye are ungodly; bu... it not a self-loving, a self-pleasing, and se... seeking Godliness, that ye have a form and sh... without power and substance? I think I dar p... nounce this concerning the Godliness of many... you, as will readily be seen, when a suitable a... searching tryal comes, and though I will not... application, condescend on particular perso... yet there are many, to whom Christ will app... is; Alas! this preached Gospel hath no effica... on many of you, neither do fruits of righteou... ness follow the same; would to God there we... as many evidences to prove you to be under t... power of Godliness, as these are to prove you t... be under the form, without the power there... of.

The 4th, and last *point of Doctrine*, from these words is, *That there is no state and condition more sad and deplorable, more dangerous to men's souls, and more abominable in the sight of God, than to have a form of Godliness without the power of it.* With what loathing & detestation doth our blessed Lord Jesus speak, *Rev.* 3. of formal and lukewarm *Laodicea*, threatning to spue her out of his mouth? The deplorableness and dangerousness of such a condition appears by these. 1. By the aptness and readiness of such persons to sin, when they

cy meet with a suitable tentation; where self-
ve, pride, covetousness, headiness, high-mind-
ness are, they will not be got restrained, and
eped in by a meer form of Godliness; and what
ow ye that are such, when, where, and how,
ese may break out in you? do we not see many
ho have had as great a shew, as of any of us,
masked, and discovered frequently? And how
on, and how easily may many of us catch a
ll? 2*ly*. By this, That the form of Godliness
ill never amount to a solid proof and evidence
f our peace with God, or of our interest in him,
hich the power of it will do; when ye come
o your death-beds, and to that solemn appear-
nce before the Tribunal of God, it will be no
olid ground of peace to you, that ye came to
hurch, heard preachings, prayed, read the
criptures, and took the Sacrament, if there be
o more; O! consider with fear and trembling,
he deceitful pleading with the Lord, of these
ersons mentioned, *Luk.* 13. Who are brought
saying, *Lord, have we not heard thee preach in
ur streets; have we not eaten and drunken in thy
resence?* And of these others, who *Matth.* 7. say
o him, *Have we not preached, and prophesied in
hy name, and cast out devils, and done many won-
erful works*? to whom he will notwithstanding
y, *depart from me ye workers of iniquity, I never
new you*; It will be no ground of peace to you,
hat ye were called Christians, that ye were al-
most Christians, that ye were not far from the
kingdom of God, and that ye could plead your
descent from Religious and Godly Progenitors;
God will tell you, *That he can out of stones raise up
children to Abraham*, and *that the ax is laid to*

the

the root of the trees, and that every tree that bring not forth good fruit, is hewed down, and cast in the fire; Yea, ye shall at last lose the Form w have not the Power of Godliness. *3dly.* By th That such a case will not lessen, nor mitigat yo Judgement; though it be in several respects, be ter to be formal, then openly profane, and di solute, yet being accompanied with more lig and with more, at least seeming nearness to Go it will make your Judgement the heavier; ther fore the Scripture says of very wicked perso that *they shall have their portion with hypocrit* insinuating, that the Formal and Hypocritic Professors hell is hotest: All ye Professors mu inavoidably, every one of you, be ranked eithe among them that have a Form without Powe or among them that have Power with the For of Godliness; ye must either be really Godl and study to be holy in all manner of converſa on, as God is holy, or to be more lyable to th Judgement of God, than if ye had never had Form; O! be exhorted to guard against all pre sapisy, and out breaking sin, and also no les against inward Hypocrisie; Study to have you Godliness so comprehensive, as it may put you beyond a meer Form into the Power, Heart, Life and Substance of it; Considering, that there are many in these last days, who will live and die in their sins, under a meer form of Godliness, without the power of it, which ought to be a warning to us all; that it may not be thus with us, the Lord himself powerfully perswade us to take with the warning.

FINIS.

THE Epiſtle Dedicatory, AND Prefatory.

To all Chriſtians exerciſed unto Godlineſs, more particularly to the Inhabitants of the City of Glaſgow *that are ſuch; and in ſpecial to theſe two Honourable Ladies, my Lady* Cochran, *Daughter to the late Noble and Renowned Earl of* Caſſils, *that excellent Patriot, and eminent Pattern and Patron of Piety; and my Lady of* Lochend, *Douager, Daughter to the late Noble Lord* Alexander, *ſometime Lord Secretary for the Kingdom of* Scotland *to the Auguſt Monarch our late Dread Soveraign King* Charles *the Firſt.*

AMongſt theſe many and various things wherewith the ſons of men are exerciſed, buſied, and taken up, if we ſtand to the award of the Holy Ghoſt, whoſe judgement of perſons and things, is alwayes according to truth, and who by the moſt

absolute perfection of his blessed Nature, is infinitly removed from all possibility of being reached with any error, or mistake, in what he giveth a judgement of; Without all controversie, Godliness hath the preference and prehemiuence; as being the most indispensably *necessary* thing, *even the one thing necessary*, in comparison with which nothing else in the world is necessary; the most truly *noble* and *honourable* thing, advancing the rational creature to a glorious conformity to the Image of God, and to a participation of the Divine Nature, and capacitating for the enjoyment of fellowship with him, wherein consisteth both the excellency and happiness thereof; the most *pleasant* and *delightful* thing, *all the wayes thereof being wayes of pleasantness*; The most *peaceful heart calming*, and *composing* thing, *all its wayes being wayes of peace*, and *the work of righteousness being peace, and the effect thereof, quietness and assurance for ever*; The most *contenting* and *soul satisfying* thing, Godliness having contentment inseparably joyned with it; The Christian *learning by it in every state wherein he is, therewith to be content, to be full, and to be hungry, to be abased, and to abound, to abound, and to suffer need*; not to be up with having, nor down with wanting, but in all the varieties and vicissitudes of his lot in the world to be *semper idem*, alwayes contented, well pleased and satisfied; convincingly proving to himself, and to all attentive beholders, the truth of that notable saying of the Lord, That *a mans life doth not consist in the abundance of the things which he possesseth*; and that contentment is the very life of a mans life; such an one hath enough, and is well pleased with that which the Lord affords, his Estate and his mind being made

rches: which contentment it ſelf ſprings alſo
of Godlineſs: for he that hath God, hath all
ngs with him, *qui habet habentem omnia, habet om-*
; he hath all things that hath him, who hath,
, who is, all things; true Piety hath always
nty, and is never without a full contenting ſuf-
ency, a ſelf-ſufficiency; for *a good man* (as
lomon ſayes, *Prov.* 14. *v.* 14.) *is ſatisfied from*
ſelf; whereas the wicked *in the fulneſs of his*
ciency is in ſtraits, *Job* 20. *v.* 23. the God-
man in the fulneſs of his ſtraits, is in a ſuffici-
cy; And being withal the moſt *gainful* and
fitable thing, even *profitable for all things*, uni-
ſally profitable, as nothing elſe in the world is,
ving the promiſe of the life that now is, and of
t which is to come; *Godlineſs with contentment*
ng great gain; not only gain, but great
n: If ſo, then moſt certainly it con-
neth us exceedingly, above what can be
, according to the Holy Ghoſts exhortation
the Apoſtle to *Timothy*, 1 *Epiſt. chap.* 4. *v.* 7.
exerciſe our ſelves to Godlineſs; to beſtir our
es actively, and, as it were, to caſt our Coat
t; the words in the Original being γυμναζε
ατον, *make thy ſelf naked*, in alluſion belike
the exerciſes of Wreſtlers, who uſed to ſtrip
emſelves of their upper and lower Garments
leaſt: that they might with the greater nimble-
s and agility catch hold of, and overthrow the
er party wreſtled with; to make it the great
ineſs of our life, even our *one thing*, as the
e Apoſtle ſayes, It was made by him: And
t we may do ſo to the better purpoſe, it will not
unworthy the while to inquire here, 1. What
lineſs is? 2. What it is to be exerciſed to

Godliness? 3. That since Godliness rightly engaged in, is so up-taking and exercising a thing, why it is so, must be so, and cannot be otherwayes? 4. How we ought to exercise our selves to it, so as we may come speed?

As for what Godliness is, or what it doth suppose or comprehend; we have a notable description of it in the *first* of these following *Sermons*, and therefore I shall only say in short, that it supposeth the exercise of faith on the Lord Jesus in order to our Justification: and the study of Holiness, and that as to both the parts of it, viz. Mortification, or dying to sin; and Vivification, or living to Righteousness; and in the just extent as to both these parts, *cleansing from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, and perfecting holiness in the fear of God*, studying holiness *in all manner of conversation*; saving no lust from the stroke of the Axe of the sin-subduing and mortifying grace of God, if it were as dear to us as a right eye, hand, or foot, and would be as cross and painful to our corrupt nature to part with, as it would be to our natural body to forego these very useful members of it; not deliberatly and allowedly balking any one duty of Religion, how sublime, spiritual, how difficultly practicable, how cross to our corrupt inclination and predominant, how costly and dangerous soever; and all this honestly aimed at in conformity to that most perfect pattern of the Holiness of God; even *to purifie ourselves as he is pure*, and *to be holy as God that called us is holy in all manner of conversation*: Or we may take it up as comprehending in it, the sincerely endeavoured exercise of all the graces of the Spirit flowing from the principles and

ts of them created and implanted in the Soul; e discharge of all called for duties, and that in e highest degree of spirituality in the manner of erforming them; the mortification of all lusts, ithout any reserve or exception; the repulsion all tentations, the Christian bearing of all osses and afflictions of what ever nature, and owsoever circumstantiated; and an external, sible, *blameless, and irreproveable conversation coming the Gospel of Christ, and adorning the Doctrine of God in all things*, that it may be fitted to ave a conviction on the Consciences of all onlookers, and that such as are not gained by the ord, may be win by such a good conversation; Godliness takes in all these, as to sincere deign, design, and endeavour.

For the *next*, what it is to be exercised to odliness? we may gather it from a parallel instituted betwixt the same, and what is the great iness, the main and principal thing, the one ing in the world that a man is taken up with, d exercised unto, on which his subsistence and elihood, his creditable and comfortable being the world depend; And thus it supposeth, A serious endeavour to be well seen in, and orowly acquainted with the nature of it, to ow what belongs to the constituting of it, and hat goes to the making of it up. 2. To have the most ordinary, frequent, and familiar subct of our thoughts. 3. To have our hearts and ections going forth towards it, more then to y thing else, *without which*, all that can be id to the commendation of it, *will be but a price in the hand of a fool, to get wisdom with while he hath not a heart to it.* 4 To have our endea-

vours drawn out mainly after it, that we may in case to say with the *Psalmist*, *One thing have desired of the Lord, and that we will seek afeer*; hath got our heart, and it shall thorow grace ha our hand, it hath gained our affections, and sh ll have our endeavours; It shall not have pareings, cuttings, and clippings, as it were, the refuse and superfluity of our thoughts, affec ons, cares, time, and endeavours, but the ve best of them. 5. To observe accuratly wh furthers, and what obstructs it, and accordin to cherish and improve the one, and with all o might vigorously to oppose and wrestle agai the other. 6. To judge our selves to be mai losers or gainers, made up, or back-set, as Go liness thrives, or not. 7. To be gladed, or ma sad, and more or less so, principally as Godlin is in good or ill, in better or worse case; to ha that, as it were the Axle-tree, about which Wheel of the affections of our Sorrow and J is mainly turned and rolled; to have it Summ (to say so) or Winter with us, as it goes w Godliness. 8. To endeavour to keep all o other businesses, motions and medlings, in t line of due subordination and subserviency to th as the main: as our grand business, and our *thing*; to be well pleased and comforted, wh they keep in this Line; and displeased and grie ed, when observed to go out of it. 9. To lo earnestly to have it consummated and perfecte to be up at the yondmost and most compleat po session and enjoyment of it, that there may n be *plus ultra*.

As to the 3. that Godliness engaged in arigh is an up-taking and exercising thing, it will be u

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enyably clear, if we consider, 1. Scripture exortations and commands, such as these, *Strive to nter in at the strait gate: work out the work of ur own salvation with fear and trembling: Give ll diligence to add to your faith vertue,* &c. *Give ligence to make your calling and election sure: t us run with patience the race that is set before : Be perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect : ye holy, as God that hath called you is holy, in all anner of conversation.* 2. Scripture assertions, affirmations, such as these, *The Kingdom of eaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by rce: They that are Christs have crucified the flesh, ith the affections and lusts; Every one that hath is hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is re: The righteous are scarcely saved,* &c. 3. ripture-experiences, and practices of the Saints, ch as these; *One thing have I desired of the Lord, d that will I seek after,* &c. *My soul followeth ord after the Lord: The desire of our soul is to thy me, and to the remembrance of thee: With my l have I desired thee in the night, yea, with my irit within me will I seek thee early: Herein do exercise my self, to have always a conscience void offence toward God and toward men: I run not uncertain, I fight not as one beating the Air: I t down my body, and keep it in subjection, lest ile I preach the Gospel to others, I my self should a cast-away: One thing I do, forgetting these ings that are behind, and reaching forth unto se things that are before, I press towards mark,* &c. *unto which promise, our twelve ibes* (the Godly of the twelve Tribes) *instantserving God night and day, hope to come.* (Where ing it for granted, that the Readers are well

versed

versed in the knowledge of the Scriptures, I have omitted particular *Citations* of *Chapters* and *Verses*). And indeed it must needs be so, and can not be otherwise, if we consider, 1. The many graces of the Spirit that are to be exercised. 2. The many duties that are to be performed with the spiritual manner of performing them that is called for. 3. The many strong and powerful lusts and corruptions that are to be subdued and mortified, some one of which would take a lifetime to get it effectually subdued & mortified as it may be some of the people of God have been praying against, weeping over, and wrestling with, one of them for many years, and yet have not got it fully mortified. 4. The many and various temptations that are to be resisted: And 5. The many crosses and afflictions that are to be suitably, and in a sanctified manner born, without either *despising* or *fainting*; Is it possible that all these, can in any tolerable measure be reached, but they will [illegible] considerably exercise, busie, and take up a [illegible] portion?

As for the *fourth*, *viz.* how, or after what manner we ought to exercise our selves to Godliness? 1. We would exercise our selves to it *knowingly* and *solidly*, understanding aright the nature of it, and taking up well what goeth to the constitution of it, that we mistake it not, as many pretenders to it, and professors of it have done, and many still do, to their souls prejudice, if not utter ruine; there may be a *zeal that is not according to knowledge*, and in a thing that is not good; and here the more zealous and exercised any be, and the faster they run, they go the further wrong,

wrong, and out of the way: the greatest Zealots and Bigots in unwarrantable, though specious-like things, are readily the most dangerous; *My son* (said dying *David* to his son *Solomon*) *know thou the God of thy fathers*; and to *Israel*, *Keep and seek for the Commandments of the Lord your God*; remarkable words, *Keep and seek*, plainly insinuating, that there can be no keeping of Gods Commandments without seeking them, without seeking to know and understand them well, 1 *Chron.* 28. *v.* 8. 9. Little knowledge of God, of the nature of Godliness, and of the principles of Religion, with some prepostrous zeal, have wrought much prejudice to it, and brought it under great contempt; we had much need *to have our loins girt about with the truth*, which in a great measure fits for the spiritual Warfare, without which the Christian hangs loose, and is easily got advantage of: I do not say this, to tempt any to be proud and conceited of, or to sit down upon, even the greatest measures of knowledge, since not he that only knows, but *he that knows and does is blest*; and *the servant that knows his masters will, and does it not, shall be beaten with double stripes*; And since *all they*, and only they, *have a good understanding that keep his Commandments*; we would by all means study to have our practice marching up foot-side with our light, and suffer none of it to be *detained in unrighteousness*, to be made a prisoner of, by setting (as it were) a Guard of corrupt affections about it, to keep it from looking out, and influencing our practice: There are many who seek to know only or mainly that they may know, and make others know

that they do know; who in Religion are all notion without motion, having a head full of light and a heart void of all life; who talk all the Religion, and do not walk it; whose knowledge aggravats their guilt, and hightens their damnation; There are some on the other hand that weary of, and almost some way nauseat what is Preached or Written for the information of their judgement, and for acquainting them with the form of sound words, and the Principles of Religion; and would only and alwayes have something spoken to some case of Conscience, to some doubt or spiritual exercise; I do not deny, but willingly and readily grant, that Christians should much covet to have their souls case and their present spiritual exercise spoken to, and their doubts about the same cleared; and our blessed Lord Jesus by his learned Tongue loves to speak words in season to weary and seriously exercised souls; yet such would also like to have their Judgement well informed in the knowledge of the Principles of the Religion which they profess, lest by their ignorance in these, they not only keep themselves in an inextricable Labyrinth of puzling and perplexing scruples, doubts and difficulties about their own Souls-state and condition, but also expose themselves as a ready prey to be catched up by seducers and erroneous persons, especially pretending to more then ordinary mortification, tenderness, and strictness in their walk; and withall expose the practice of Godliness, because of their great ignorance, to reproach and obloquy. There is a 3d. sort that have a liking only to hear of some one debated and controverted thing or other, though it be even amongst truly

Godly

odly men, and of such a nature, wherein pos-
ly both the dissenting parties may retain their
fferent apprehensions to their dying day, with-
t prejudice to their Salvation; nay, it may be
thout prejudice to their being owned and
untenanced by God in their administrations
d religious services; and loath in comparison
these, the great and substantial truths of the
ospel; as if all Religion were to be placed in
ese debateable and more remote things, and
awn out from the heart and vitals, to the ex-
emities and skirts of Religion; such may much
ndanger the power of Godliness, and the very
ul and substance thereof to themselves and o-
hers also: I do not for all this (God forbid I
ould) condemn or decry, seriously and sober-
y manifested dislike of, and displeasure at, sinful
lence as to any thing that is indeed contrary to
ound Doctrine, and the power of Godliness;
y thing that is certainly displeasing to God, and
hat may be the ground of a controversie from
im, though found even in truly Godly, and o-
herwayes faithful men; Nor would I be so un-
derstood, as if I meant that we should in the least
involve our selves in so much as the constructive
approbation of any thing we judge to be sinful;
or that we should carry luke-warmly and uncon-
cernedly in the lowest concerns of Jesus Christ,
nd of Religion, wherein both Preachers and
Professors of the Gospel may have been not a
little culpable and blame-worthy; only I would
not have all Religion and serious Godliness swal-
lowed up in the Gulf of endless debates and di-
sputes about more remote and less momentuous
things, controverted amongst truly godly men;

It

It may be there hath been, as too much liking of such Preaching amongst not a few; So too much Preaching by some to such purposes, that are at best but jejune and lean, being compared with the great and substantial truths of the Gospel especially when in a whole Sabbath, or in a whole Sermon, the poor people have got little or no thing to feed on, but such bare, barren, and dry debates, if not (from some at least) declamations and invectives against owning the Authority of lawful Civil Rulers; and directly or indirectly against hearing of honest Ministers of the Gospel, because of some lesser differences, whether in judgement or practice; with which some itching after such things, have, it may be, been so taken, that they have said, O! such a brave day of the Gospel! We never saw such a day of the Gospel, whilst it may be there was but very little of the Gospel Preached; Little spoken to the commendation of Christ, and of serious Godliness; Little to provoke to the exercise of Repentance, of Mortification, Humility, Self-denyal, Heavenly-mindedness, Tenderness, and of other Graces and Christian Duties; but such things only or mainly insisted on, that had little genuine and native tendency either to the conversion or building of Souls; The great end of Preaching, —*whom we Preach*, saith the Apostle, and *I determined to know nothing amongst you, but Jesus Christ and him crucified*, saith the same Apostle: As it's good to be alwayes zealously affected towards things that are right; so the zeal of Ministers and private Christians ought to be suited and proportioned to the nature of things, so that the whole or greatest part of it would not

be

ing o suffered to go out after, nor to be spent upon
much gs more debateable, especially amongst know-
re a and Godly men, and that are further remov-
with from the heart, soul, life, and power of Re-
spel gion; while in the mean time little of it is re-
whole ved and left for the most necessary momentu-
no s and substantial things.

dry 2. We would exercise our selves to Godliness
mati-*riously* and *concernedly*; which these fore-cited
ority precs or implied Scripture-exhortations, *To*
in-*rive to enter in at the strait gate*, to strive as in
s of agony: *To work out the work of our own salva-*
nces*tion with fear and trembling*: *To run with patience*
hich *he race set before us*: *To do violence to the King-*
dom of God, and to take it by force, &c. obviously
ch hold forth; we should be exercised to it, and
ch taken up with it, as a business of life and death,
s bu and as that wherein eternal Salvation and dam-
oke nation is concerned, as we are, or are not suit-
lously exercised to it.

e of 3. We would exercise our selves to Godliness
Self *sincerely* and *singly*, without any allowed crook, or
and indirect byass, as, to be seen of men, to be ob-
such served and commended by them as godly persons;
ittle Nay, in our exercising of our selves to it, we
eog would not so much consult our own peace and
l of comfort, the clearing up of our interest in God,
stle and the truth and reality of our gracious state,
bu and our well-grounded hope of Heaven, and of
A the recompence of reward (though we may
ffe warrantably, and ought to have a just regard to
cal these in their own room and place), as the glory
be of God; that would be the prevalently and pre-
ng, dominantly influencing motive and inductive to
not the exercise of Godliness; *walk before me*, saith
be the

the Lord to *Abraham*; *I was upright also before him*, saith *David*; It's said of *Zacharias* and *Elizabeth*, that *they were both righteous before God*. We ought (being commanded) *to perfect holiness in the fear of God*; to endeavour to be *filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ to the praise and glory of God*; *To do whatever we do to the glory of God*; And we are told, that *he is a Jew that is one inwardly, and that Circumcision is that of the heart, whose praise is not of men, but of God*; The very prevalency of self-seeking and hypocrisie, not to speak of the reign and dominion of it (which is inconsistent with a gracious state) is highly displeasing to the Lord, and is a greatly corrupting quality of our very best duties and actions, and makes them to stink in his nostrils; and puts *David* to cry (for aggravating his own sin) *Thou lovest truth in the inward parts*; and from the fear of it, to pray, *Let my heart be sound in thy Statutes, that I be not ashamed*: Sincerity is an universally indispensible requisite to the whole exercise of Godliness, and to the exercise of every part of it; we would exercise our selves in good earnest to Godliness in the most retired, as well as in the most open and publick duties; as well when God only looks on, as if all the world were looking on: Alas! we seek too much to commend our selves to, and to receive praise from, one another; How poor, lame, bare, empty, formal, and lifeless are many of our secret duties of Worship? And how slovenly and nasty (to speak so) are we in them, while as we endeavour in more seen and social duties, to be more neat, and in a better dress, and to have them more fine, full and lively? Ah!

Ah! there is but too much of the hypocritical Pharisees character legible on us, which is, *to do all to be seen of men.*

4. We would exercise our selves to Godliness *soberly*; we would *behave and quiet our selves as weaned children, not exercising our selves in great matters, and in things too high and wonderful for us*; nor in things that are without our Sphear and Line, that are alien from our place, station, calling, and capacity: we would think soberly of our selves, of our attainments in Religion, of any gifts, parts, endowments, and accomplishments, of any thing done by us, and of any success in it, *not thinking of our selves above what is meet, and what we ought to think*; as knowing that we want a great deal more then we have: We would be sober in our Judging and censuring of others, as considering that *in many things we offend all*; and fearing lest while we behold Motes in the eyes of our Brethren, there be Beams found in our own; and while we are too severe and rigid in our censuring the lesser fallings and faults of others, and more especially of such as we are convinced are truly Godly, we be not found taking undue Latitudes to our selves in these that are greater and grosser; putting the best construction on their doubtful actions, that in Christian and discerning Charity (for Charity is not blind) they are capable of; we would pity and pardon their infirmities, and would bear with them, without exaggerating them on the one hand, and without allowing, justifying, or making our selves in the least accessory to them by sinful connivance on the other hand; and would not think hardly of such on the account

of

of their differing from us in judgement some lesser things, far removed from the foundation of Religion, and wherein judicious, tender, and godly men may differ; without hazarding (as I said) their salvation, or marring their acceptance before God, as to their religious performances, and without hurting the peace of the Church, or obstructing their edifying and comfortable Christian-fellowship and converse together, if the difference be carried with sobriety; there have been alwayes, and will readily be still such differences, till all the Godly be in Heaven, where they will be perfectly of a piece, and one, as Christ and his Father are one, without any the least different apprehension about any thing; we would blunt the sharp edge of our censure on our selves, and be amongst the first that give charity to others, where there is any ground for it; and amongst the last that give charity to our selves, where there is not great ground: we would withall be sober and moderat in the use of all creature-comforts, *rejoycing* in them, *as if we rejoyced not*; and *mourning* for crosses in them, *as if we mourned not*, *buying*, *as if we possessed not*, and *using this world as not abusing it*; not suffering our selves *to be brought under the power of any of them*; We would be sober and moderat in our pursuing after these things, in our injoying of them, that we be not too much taken or tickled with them: nor too much grieved when they are blasted to us, or taken from us; we would be sober and moderat in pursuing our right to the outmost rigour of Justice, and would yield and cede for the good and edification of others, as far as the Word of God, and a good Conscience will allow us; *Augustine*

sine tells us, that it was grown to be a Proverb among his Countrey-men, *ut habeas quietum temporis, perde aliquid*, that thou mayest have a quiet life, part with a part of thy right; we would thus, all these wayes, and more particularly this last way, *make our moderation known to all men*, as the Apostle exhorts, *Phil.* 4. *for the Lord is at hand*, to right all our wrongs.

5. We would exercise our selves to Godliness *universally*, we would not halve nor divide it, neither be partial in it; we would balk no part of it, nor allow our selves to vake or ly by from any piece of its exercise, as it is called for; we would *have respect to all Gods Commandments, that we be not ashamed*; we would *esteem all his Commandments concerning all things to be right, and hate every false way*; we would *regard no iniquity in our hearts*; we would *be holy in all manner of conversation*; In our religious, civil, and in our very natural actions, such as eating and drinking; In all the duties of our general and particular callings: we would be exercised to the whole of it, not only to the more easie, but also the more difficult part of it, not only to the more seen, but also to the more secret parts of it; all graces would be exercised, all duties discharged, all corruptions mortified, all temptations resisted, and all crosses and inflicted afflictions suitably born; we must not be *almost*, but *altogether Christians*, receiving *whole* Christ, and giving our selves *wholly* up and away to him, without reserve or reversion; For if we be but *almost* Christians, we will be but *almost* saved, and that almost salvation may, and certainly will, if it remain still, but

but *almost*, resolve in *no* Salvation, and in eternal damnation and destruction.

6. We would exercise our selves to Godliness *constantly*; we would *keep Gods Commandments alwayes even to the end*; we would *serve him in righteousness, and holiness without fear before him all the days of our life*; we would *shew forth the same diligence, to the full assurance of hope to the end*; we would *continue with Christ in all his temptations*; we must *be faithful to the death, if we would have the Crown of life*; we must *endure to the end, if we would be saved*; we are never allowed to forego this exercise, we have no dispensation from God to abandon and shake it off at any time, in any place, in any company, under any dispensation of providence, nor in any thing.

It is much to be bemoaned, lamented and wept over, if it were, even with tears of blood, that precious Scripture-godliness should in this wished and worn out, in this deeply declined and dreadfully degenerated Generation, be not only so much out of request, but also so much depreciated, disparaged and decried, as if it had quite losed its true intrinsick value and worth, and were as to its exercise, forbidden by an audible voice from Heaven; the very form of it being cast off by many, and the power of it denyed by most. Can they on any just ground, or reason, be judged to exercise themselves to Godliness? 1. Who live and ly still contentedly in gross and palpable ignorance of its nature, and of what goes to the constituting of it. 2. Who villifie, revile and reproach it. 3. Who deride and mock it. 4. Who take up and intertain a secret heart-picque and prejudice at it, and at all that are seriously exercised

cised to it, all such being a weariness and burden to them; however some may carry their prejudice more smoothly and handsomly, and less discernably then others. 5. Who make no Conscience at all of secret and Family-duties of Gods Worship. 6. Who place all Religion and Godliness in meer external performances of duty (making these the *Capitals*, if not the *Totals* of their Piety) without any regard to the Principle, Motive, Manner, and End thereof, and in abstaining from the more gross outward acts of sin, without any serious consideration of the spiritual meaning, and broad extent of the Law of God. 7. Who never take any notice of the inward stirrings and workings of the corruption of their Nature, nor ever in the least cry out of themselves as wretched and miserable on that account: 8. Who if they mind any thing of Religion at all, make it their business, and go about it only to establish their own righteousness, and being ignorant of the righteousness of God, do not submit unto it. 9. Who rest satisfied with, and sit down contentedly upon their own fancied, sufficient measures of Godliness, without designing or endeavouring to grow, to make any progress, or further advances therein, or to make any additions to their supposed attainments; as if what they had were enough, and there needed no more, and as if any thing beyond their stinted and limited measure were superfluous niceness, and unnecessary preciseness; altogether disconform to the many Scripture-commands concerning growth, and adding one degree of grace to another, and carrying on holiness to perfection in the fear of God; and to the practice of the A-

postle

postle (proposed as a pattern for our imitation) whose *one thing* it was *to forget these things that were behind*, all his former attainments in Religion, and *to reach forth unto these things that were before*, which he had not yet attained; and to *press towards the mark*, never allowing himself to sit down, *as if he had already attained*, or were *already perfect*, till he came thither even to that perfection of holiness that accompanieth the resurrection from the dead: How appositе application may be made of these sayings, *ubi incipit nolle fieri melior, ibi desinis esse bonus*; where thou begins to be unwilling to grow better, there thou ceasest to be good; and *qui dicit sufficit, deficit*, he that says its enough, and that he needs no more Religion, is certainly utterly wanting, and defective in it. Concerning all whom we may confidently and without any the least breach of charity affirm, that they are not exercised to Godliness, according to the Scripture-delineation and description of it, by which it is only constituted such: which estrangement from, and dislike of this blessed exercise is influenced by some one or other, or by all of these: 1. By the practical ignorance and unbelief of the transcendent worth, matchless excellency, and indispensible necessity of it. 2. By secret undervaluing the inestimable worth of their own immortal Souls; the loss whereof cannot be compensed by gaining of the whole world, and which cannot possibly be saved without Godliness, *without which no man shall see the Lord.* 3. By their not really believing their own utterly ruined, lost and undone state by nature, and not being kindly touched and gripped at the heart with the faith

of

of the feud and enmity betwixt God and them, as being *by nature children of wrath, and heirs of damnation.* And 4. By their being ingulfed and drowned, as it were, in the cares of the things of this present world, some going to their Farm, and some to their Merchandile, and others to somewhat else, and all of them poltponing, neglecting, and making light of this *one thing necessary*, of this incontrovertibly *better part, which shall never be taken from them*, whose choice thorow grace it is.

It is also with much sadness and sorrow of Soul to be regrated, that many of these who are privileged with a Principle of Godliness implanted in their Souls, are lamentably little, seriously and suitably exercised thereunto; such are often ready to complain, that Godliness doth not thrive with them, and that they are not proficients therein; while in the mean time, without the accomplishment of a very diligent search, and on but very overly reflections, they may easily discover this to be one, if not the great reason thereof, *viz.* That they are but little *exercised to Godliness*; it being by Gods blessing on their exercising themselves as they ought unto it, that they are made to grow and profit therein. I do not mean that diligence or frequently exercised and repeated acts of Grace or Godliness do of themselves efficiently either produce or strengthen and increase the habits thereof, as frequent acts do acquired habits; for unless there be first a habitual stock of grace, or a principle of Godliness created, infused, and implanted in the soul, not one gracious or godly act can be elicited and drawn forth, but this I mean, that God dealing with the

Godly

Godly, as intelligent rational Agents, for provoking and incouraging them to serious diligence in the exercise of Godliness hath in deep adorable wisdom so ordered the matter, that by his special blessing on their diligence, he doth as certainly, if not also as much strengthen and increase the stock, habit, and principle of Grace and Godliness, as if their own diligence and frequent exercise of acts did efficiently produce that strength and growth; And I suppose its in this sense that *Divines* are to be understood, when they say, *habitus infusi habent se ad modum habituum acquisitorum*, that *infused habits are some way after the manner of acquired ones*: So that the complaints of such may rest on themselves, as to this matter, they having so manifestly culpable accession thereunto by their lying so much by from this so necessary and profitable exercise: This being so very certain, though a very sad truth, that there is with the Godly, even with the Godly sin, much sin against the Lord their God, in being so little as becometh exercised to Godliness; It will not be lost labour for furthering the lamentation over it, to enquire a little, 1. Into the evidences of it. 2. Into the springs and causes of it. 3. Into the aggravations of its sinfulness: And 4. Into the great prejudices which they sustain by it. *First* then, as to the *evidences* of it, alas! they are many and manifest, as 1. Little earnestness in Prayer, or little *Praying in Prayer*, as the word is, *James* 5. *v.* 17. Little *crying to God night and day* in Prayer; little *wrestling with him* in Prayer; little *stirring up to take hold of him* therein; little *continuing instant in Prayer*; little holy importunity in that exercise; little obedience given to

these

these commands anent *praying alwayes, and not fainting*, and *praying without ceasing*: Which supposeth, 1. Our keeping ordinary set-times daily for Prayer. 2. Our watching over, and striking in with all providential calls unto, and opportunities for the discharge of that duty. 3. Our setting times a-part purposely and extraordinarily, for Prayer with Fasting, according to emergencies of more personal or private, or of more publick concern. 4. Our intermixing all our ordinary businesses, and the duties of our particular Callings with Ejaculatory Prayer, with frequent turnings up (as it were) of the Pilgrims blink to God; whereby our spirits would be kept from wearing out, and growing carnal in them; whereby a spiritual frame would be got in a good measure maintain'd, and these things some way spiritualized unto us, and we the better disposed for more purposed and lengthned Prayer; The Lord having so disposed that there are none, or but very few of our ordinary businesses but they are capable of such an intermixture of Ejaculations, without obstructing or prejudicing of them. And 5. Our endeavouring to keep our selves alwayes in a praying frame, in good terms, and in speaking-terms with God, dieting our selves, as it were, all along our ordinary businesses, movings, and dealings, by a spiritually strict and accurate walk for fellowship with God in Prayer, so as we may never be wrong put at for the actual discharge of that duty; guarding against, and keeping at due distance from every thing that hath the remotest tendency towards influencing indisposition for it; studying to be so tender, that when we find our selves

begin

begin to be vain, roaving or extravagant in our thoughts, to be impertinent or unedifying in our discourse and communication, or to take any the least sinful and unsuitable latitude to our selves in our practice; we may (as it were) be whispered in the ear, this may marr a praying frame, this may obstruct both liberty and acceptance in Prayer, and also a disposition for it; and thereby to be instantly frighted from the thing; which is worthy of Christians who are called unto, and priviledged with fellowship with God in that and other duties of his Worship; and would make a little Heaven upon Earth. 2. Little spiritual watchfulness, though a duty much called for from, and much pressed on us in the Scriptures; Little watching over our hearts, and *keeping them with, or above, all keeping and diligence*; Little watching over our thoughts, that no vain ones be lodged within us; little watching over our words, little *setting a watch at the door of our lips, that no corrupt communication proceed out of our mouth*, but that which is savoury, & well seasoned, *that tends to the use of edifying, and may minister grace to the hearers*; Little watching over our eyes & other senses, little bringing them with holy *Job* under the Bond of a Covenant with God, but little conscience made to set as it were a Sentinel at the Port or Door of every Sense, strictly examining all incomers and outgoers, concerning their business; Little watching over our actions, little *pondering the path of our feet*, looking narrowly that *our steps be ordered according to the Word*; whence it comes to pass that we are rash and precipitant in many of our movings and actings, and are constrained to reflect on them with little satisfaction,

n, and with many challenges, wishing we had
een better advised, more deliberat and watch-
ll; little watching over our Duties, how they
re performed; and over our Graces, how
ey are exercised, that we may be accord-
gly affected; little watching over all the stir-
ings, workings, and prevailings of our inward
Corruptions and Lusts, over our easily distem-
ering, and discomposing Passions and Humors,
hat we may be suitably affected; little watch-
g over all Satans movings, by his many and
arious Temptations about us, living almost as
ecurely often, as if there were no Devil from
ithout to tempt, and no Corruption within to
eset the tentation, & as if we were in case to say,
ith Holy Jesus, *The prince of this world cometh,*
nd he hath nothing in us; Hence it is, that we
re so much *ignorant of his devices*, and that he
o frequently *gets advantage of us*; little watch-
ll observing all the movings of Divine Pro-
idence about us, and ours, ordering things so,
s if he had (to speak so with reverence) no-
hing else to do in the world, but to look to poor
s, and our concerns; whereby it cometh to pass
hat many precious providences are either keep-
d from coming our way (for he loves to work
here he is observed, and noticed; and obser-
ble things readily befall them that are given to
bservation) or else escape our observation;
nd so we are deprived of many sweet, com-
orting, and heart-engadging discoveries and
roofs of his tender care, and lovingkindness;
nd God is robbed of the thankful acknowledg-
ent and Glory that is due to him on account of
em; Hereby also we bewray a great defect of

Spiritual Wisdom, which lyeth much in accurate observing, and suitable improving of all occurring providences; a Soul-feeding, fatning, edifying and enriching exercise; as the experience of these who are acquainted with it, and give to it, aboundantly proves; *Whose is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the lovingkindness of the Lord*; *Psal.* 107. last. I hope none will be so inconsiderat, from what is discourst here, about the observing of Providences, to conclude that we intend either to make Providence the Rule of Duty or to incourage any to owne that as Duty which otherwayes is not, because of some more smalling Providences attending the same; or to discourage them in following clear Duty, because of some more crosse Providences occurring therein. 3*ly*. Little Meditation on God, and on his Laws, on Spiritual and Divine Subjects, though commanded in Scripture, and particularly to *Josuah* (whose imploy being Captain General of 600000 fighting men, was attended, and that necessarily with so much busines, with so many avocations and distractions) as not only compatible with his greatly up-taking imployment, but also as contributive to the success of it; So far was it from being a let or impediment in the way thereof; though much practised by the Saints, as namely by *Isaac* and *David*; and though withall much commended in the Scripture, and given as one great character of the blessed man, *Psal.* 1. *v.* 2. Ah! how little, how lamentably little Conscience is made of this Sublimely Spiritual and excellent Duty? how rarely is it premitted to Prayer? and yet how

little

ttle are we challenged for the omission of it
comparatively at least? a shrewd evidence of
ttle delight in God, and in his Law, and of a
rnal frame in a great measure. 4*ly*. Little
s and constant following after clearness, and
urance anent a special interest in God, from
probability to a certainty; I do not say, that
ch clearnesse and assurance is essential to, and
separable from the being of an interest in him;
or do I deny, but God may sometimes Sove-
ignly, for his own Holy and Wise Ends with-
old and suspend this comfortable clearness, and
urance from a Person that is in good earnest
ercised to godlinesse, and working out his own
vation with fear and trembling; but this I say,
at many Believers, and godly Persons, through
erruptions of diligence, and dalliances with
ols, and not suitably endeavouring to have
eir walk as an even-spun-threed of godlinesse,
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out the matter; further light and clearness
erein might through Gods blessing, be at-
ned by a more equall, and constant exercise-
of themselves to Godliness. 5*ly*. Little day-
self-searching, and examination, little *Com-
ing with our heart upon our beds*; though com-
nded in the Scripture, and practised by the
ts recorded therein, and a considerable
ing of the serious exercise of Godlinesse,
ping Christians acquainted with, and well
ed in the knowledge of their own Spiritual
dition, & in a capacity, to make an intelligent
distinct representation, on all occasions of
posture of their Souls-affairs unto God;

keeping humble under the dayly discoveries made to them of their sinful fallings, and shortcomings by that Self-examination; contributing to make necessary Challenges for dayly contracted guilt, frequent, fresh, and lively; putting to see much of the need of Christ, both as to Righteousness and Sanctification; helping to give him much dayly Imployment; contributing to an high and precious esteem of him, as being found to be so needful, useful and stedable every day; putting on to the righting of things that are discovered in the search to be amiss and to be up at what is found to be defective and short; constraining the Christian to ly (as it were) constantly a bleatching, and whiteing at *the fountain opened to the house of David for sin and for uncleanness*, so many foul spots being discovered, to be drawn on every day; being withall a notable friend unto, and a furtherer of the serious exercise of Repentance, and Self-loathing a most profitable, exercise, though alas! but little time be taken for it by many Christians as a distinct Duty; there are but few that know where they leave in it with *God* in the evening and where to begin in the next day, that give up accounts to him every night, and take down from him new directions every morning. 6*l*y Little suitable watching over, and guarding against our most predominant evil or evils whence it comes to pass, that we are so frequently worsted by them, dragged, as it were, at their heels, and that tentations to them, so often (in a manner) wipe their feet on our necks: As the Psalmist was taken up about this, when he says, *Psal.* 18. *v.* 23. *I was upright also before*

him, and keeped my self from mine iniquity, from the iniquitie that was mine in a more special manner, by tentations to which I was most frequently assaulted, and prevailed over; I set, (as if he had said) the strongest guard to the most easily assaultable & most frequently assaulted piece of the Wall, and where the strongest assailants were. 7*ly*: Little looking to, wrestling with, lamenting over, and groaning under the inward stirrings, workings, and prevailings of Indwelling Corruption, when it doth not break out to the observation of Standers-by,) as our greatest Cross and Affliction, and the thing that makes us reckon our selves to be wretched, and miserable above, and beyond what any outward Affliction or Cross doth; (as there is much reason we should on many accounts, it being the only Cross that obstructs fellowship with God, that makes dishonourable to him, that marrs peace, that defiles the Soul; that culpably indisposeth for Duty; that makes scandalous; and that makes every other Cross to become doubly a Cross.) as the great Apostle did, *Rom.* 7. *v.* 24. in whom the body of death so greatly groaned under by him, was more, very much more mortified, than it is in most men living in the world. 8*ly*. Little setting of times a part purposly, and extraordinarly to deal with God by Prayer; mourning, humiliation, and fasting, that he would graciously please to take course with, and cast out some lusts that Christians have been for a long time frequently foiled by, and have had but little success, as to any considerable victory obtained over them; especially considering that such Deeds of strong Lusts and Corruptions *are not cast*

out but by fasting and prayer. 9*ly*. Little Conscience made of spending our time profitably, and with Spiritual Frugality (*The only thing,* (saith one) *wherein avarice or greed is honest*) Little *waiting all the dayes of our appointed time till our change come*; Little serious dealing with God by Prayer, that he would *teach us* (effectually) *to number our dayes that we may apply our hearts to wisdom*; to improve aright, and to the best advantage every piece and portion of our time which is all precious, for all of which we have work, and for all of which we must be countable to him; ah! the main unfilled-up vacuities and blanks that are in the Compt-Book of our Life; many things of the day have not been done in their day, the beautiful seasons of many Duties have been suffered to pass by without due improvement; ah! how much, how very much of our precious short and uncertain time have we trifled away unprofitably? which should be for a Lamentation: These are a few of the many evidences of this sad Truth, that many of the Godly are not with suitable seriousness exercised to Godliness: from the contraries of which, we may know so many marks and evidences of Persons suitably exercised to Godliness.

As to the 2*d*. thing, *viz*. The *Rises*, *Springs* and *Causes* of it; Amongst others, we may take notice of these, 1. It hath no doubt its Rise from a great remainder of un-subdued Averstion from, yea, antipathy with, and enmity against the serious and sedulous exercise of Godliness; 2*ly*. From a strong natural propension, and inclination to weerie and tyre of well-doing, or equal and constant exercising our selves thus

which

which Christians are frequently called in the scripture to be upon their Guard against: (3*ly*. may sometimes in a very ill frame of Soul, and under much distance from God, proceed from an inadvertent, indeliberat, secure and careless abusing of our light anent that precious point of Truth greatly contributing to the Support, and Comfort of deeply exercised Souls, disposed to be much troubled, and discouraged, because of their small measures of Grace, and little growth in it; to wit, that the least measures, and lowest degrees of true Grace are saving; and that they are the receiving, imbracing, closing, adhering, and relying Acts of Faith, of, with, to, and on Christ, the Object thereof, that are the justifying Acts of it, and the proper condition of the Covenant of Grace; and not the Acts of the Faith of evidence and assurance: And from suffering our selves to be tempted, almost to sit down here, without that diligent labouring after growth that's requisit, and without *shewing forth* (as we ought) *the same diligence to the full assurance of hope to the end*; and too much listning through laziness to these deceitful, enchanting, bewitching, and self-pleasing insinuations and suggestions, you would spare your selves a little, you need not always be so hard at work; and since there is ground to think that your state is safe, and that you are somewhat swattered and wrestled out of the perplexing fears, and doubts which you were once in, about the Salvation of your Souls, you may now take you a little ease, and somewhat, as it were, slack your girths, wherein, whatever Truth may possibly, in some respect be, yet the design of the tentation

is manifestly to make Negligent, Lazie and Slothful;) all that are Godly, are not equally exercised to Godliness; all for the Salvation of whose Souls Blessed Jesus was put to so much sore Soul-travel and toil; are not at the like, and same degree of Labour and diligence, in working out their own Salvation; O! dreadful and detestable whispers and Suggestions, (considering their tendency) and to be fled from, with abhorrency, and horrour; yet the remainder of In-dwelling Corruption, and of the deceitful heart in the Godly, when at distance from God and in an evil frame, (as I said,) may listen somewhat, though not without all reluctation and strugling to such Siren-songs, to such cruel Suggestions, though palliated with the specious pretext of kindness and compassion; which yet will afterwards, when reflected on, in a better frame, cause great sorrow of heart, and waken old fears, and make old wounds bleed, and smart afresh, nay, it may be make the truth of a gracious state to be as much as ever doubted of, and called in question; this would be spoke, heard of, and read with much fear and trembling; O! the desperat wickedness, and deep, yea, unknowable deceit of the heart, even in the Godly, in so far as it is unrenewed; happie they whom God graciously keeps from the sad, and deplorable experience of this; but there are, doubtless such, who are thus tempted, and not without all success, for a time at least; O sad! there must sure be something more then ordinary, that keeps several Christians from being so seriously, equally, and constantly exercised to Godliness, as others are; try, try, and exa-

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mine narrowly, and it's not impossible, nay, not altogether improbable, but somewhat of this may be found at the bottom; and when it is found, let it be bitterly mourned for, and holy indignation and revenge stirred up by the persons, in more or less guilty thereof, against themselves, the pardon of so horrid guilt be sought after, through *the blood of Jesus Christ that cleanseth from all sin*, and such Suggestions be forever run from, as we would run away from the Devil, and be avoided, and rejected with the height of abhorrency, *Get thee hence Satan.* 4*ly.* This may have it's rise, from our being too much busied about, exercised to, and taken up with *many things*, as Godly *Martha* was, for which she is sharply checked by our Lord; we are naturally disposed to make many things more necessary, then God hath made them, and to exhaust the strength of our thoughts, cares, affections and endeavours about the things of this world, and to reserve but a smal pittance of them for the *one thing necessary*, (our Spirits being but finit, so that we cannot at the same time be intent on different things) we are often taken with distempering fits of the old disease and folly, *Spending our labour for that which doth not profit, and our money for that which is not bread*, in part, *forsaking God the fountain of living waters*; where the Comfort and Satisfaction runs purest, cleerest, freshest, sweetest and strongest, and with Toil and Labour, though but lost labour; *digging to our selves broken cisterns that can hold no water*; In part, *gadding about to seek Love*, and wearying our selves in doing so; Inordinate and excessive love to the things of the

world, which did sometimes reign, and had the Dominion, now and then, alas! prevails; and that which is the Death-ill of unregenerat worldly men, becometh sometimes the sore distemper, disease, and sickness of the Children of God slily. It may have its rise in not a few, from their being so little in fellowship with, and in the serious observation of such Christians, as are most diligently exercised to Godlinesse, that work hardest, at the great work of their own salvation; from being little with them, in Duties of mutual edification: The great seriousness, diligence, tenderness, and livelines of some Christians, is through Gods blessing, a mighty spur of excitment, and provocation to others; *They that dwell under* (thriving and growing) *Israels shaddow:* (As it is *Hos.* 14. 7.) *Return and revive as the corn, and grow as the vine, and the scent thereof is as the wine of Lebanon*; Behold, how *Israel* and *Judah* work up one another to an excellent, and most desirable frame, and to much seriousness, tenderness and livelines in the exercise of Godlines, *Ierem.* 50. *v.* 4, 5. and Christians are pathetically exhorted to provock one another (even as in a *paroxcysme* (as the word bears) in a heat and agonie of holy striving and contending) *to love and good works*, *Heb.* 10. *v.* 24. Little of the Communion of Saints, and little delight to be in Duties of mutual edification with the tendereſt, is, (as I said) a considerable cause of our being so little exercised to Godlines; but Alas! here is the Lamentation, that when we are much worn out of seriousness, and fallen by our selves, when we loiter, and grow lazie, there is a great shyness

nesse, and loathnesse to be much in the company of such who would hold the Good continually in our side, and would by their seriousnesse and tenderness be always reproving us, jogging our elbow, chopping us up, and driving us forward; we would therefore so much the more cross our own aversation in such a Case, & in order to our recovery, reviving, and being provocked to more seriousnesse and diligence, be more frequently in fellowship with such; *where God commands the blessing.* 6ly. It may have its rise in part from not sultablie considering, how few are saved, and how difficultly these few are saved; with how much adoe, with what working at, and working out their own Salvation, and that with fear and trembling, they are saved; what hard and sore Labour the most eminent of the Saints have been put to in this matter; a famous instance whereof, we have in the Person of the Apostle *Paul*, who proposeth himself, as a Patern to other Christians, 1*Cor.*9. towards the close, whom while he exhorts *so to run, as they may obtain*, he sayes, *I so run not as uncertain, I so fight, not as beating the air, but I beat down my body, and keep it in subjection*, &c. and elsewhere, *herein do I exercise my self, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men: and one thing I do, forgetting these things that are behind, and reaching furth unto these things that are before, I press towards the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus*; *The righteous are scarcely saved*, It's not without great difficulty, they have nothing over, nothing to spare: the Scripture, nor the Saints therein recorded acknowledge no works of Supererogation, no out-doing

doing of the Command, or doing more then is commanded, that's but a late invention of self-deluded, of doating and dreaming, of vainly puft up, and proudly pretending perfectionists. 7*ly*. It may have its rise from not duely pondering that, though we should not perish, but get our Souls for a prey; (which will be a great matter, yea, even a marvel of mercy) yet by not suitably exercising our selves to Godliness, and not being close and constantly at our main work, we may be greatly at a loss along our life, as to much sweet peace, comfort and joy that would wait on our Labour and diligence; and when it comes to dying, may be not a little darkned and confused, as to our interest in God, and be, as it were, dragged and towed in to the Harbour with much difficultie, and it may be not without disquieting fears of not winning in at all, and of being Ship-wrakt in sight, and in the very mouth of it; while other more laborious, and hard-working Christians will come in with a Plerophory, with up-sails, top and top-gallant *of the full assurance of Faith*: and though we should be somewhat quiet, as to our state, yet we may be on the Rack by many and just Challenges for our slothfulness, lazines and little labouring: It will be much, if many Christians of this Generation go not off the Stage, under a Cloud, and in much heavines; our being so little exercised to Godlinesse sadly portends this. 8*ly*: It may have its rise from little, and infrequent serious dwelling on the thoughts of the dissolution of all things quickly approaching, *when all the works of the earth shall be burnt up with fire*, about which we have been so careful and cumbered

cumbered, to the great prejudice, and postponing of the *one thing necessary*; and from living little in the lively hope and expectation *of those new heavens, and of that new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness*: which would make us put it home closely and pungently, with a sort of Appeal to our own Consciences, *If these things must be dissolved, what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness?* And so listen attentively, and concernedly to that grave exhortation of the Holy Ghost, by the Apostle *Peter*, 2 Ep. *Chap.* 3. *v.* 11, and 14. *Wherefore, beloved, seing ye look for such things, be diligent:* (or make haste, use all dispatching in your work without delaying or dallying σπεδάσατε) *that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless*; And withall, from few serious thoughts *of putting off this tabernacle*, and dislodging, from little lively believing, looking and longing for *an house not made with hands*; from little longing *to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord*, which would put us in a capacity with the Apostle, 2 *Cor. Chap.* 5. *v.* 9. To say, *wherefore we labour, that whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him*; Φιλοτιμεμεθα, we love and covet it as an honour, O great honour! O blessed Covetousnesse and Ambition! 9*ly*. It may, as to some at least, have its rise from little serious considering and reflecting upon how much of the morning of our days we squandered away, without minding, or making for our great work; how long we were a yocking; how long it was e're we were started to our Christian Race and Course; by which we are doubtless called to work the harder, to set down our feet, and to

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run the faster, to call thick, and to make the quicker dispatch, even to double our diligence, and to do violence to our former negligence; hearing that word of the Holy Ghost, by the Apostle often sadly and shrilly sounding in our ears; *The time that is past of your life may suffice you*, to have been Idle and out of Work; the time is short, the task is long, *castegimus ergo moras & moras*, Let us therefore mend both our manners and our pace, let us correct, not only our deportment, but also our delays. 10*ly*, It may have its rise from little suitable use-making of Jesus Christ, *as made of God sanctification* to his People, As the *strong and mighty one, on whom their help is laid; as a green Fir-tree from whom all their fruit is found; by whose abiding in them, and theirs in him, they are made to bring forth much fruit, without whom they can do nothing; in whom they have righteousness and strength; and in whom it hath pleased the Father that all fulness should dwell*, and on this blessed design, *that out of his fullness they may receive, and grace for grace; and through whom strengthning them, they may be able to do all things*; All things called for from them in point of Duty, in that manner and measure, that they may humbly and confidently expect Gods approbation and acceptation on his account: and from little holy skill & dexterity in improving, and making use of the Covenant of Grace, of the Covenant of Promises, wherein he hath graciously engadged himself to make *waiters on him, to renew their strength, or change their strength*; to make his assisting Grace to be as a change of so many fresh Post-horses attending them at every Turn, and Stage of their Christian Course and Journey towards Heaven, to carry them thorow safely

safely, quickly and easily; to make them *run and not faint, walk and not weary, and to mount up with eagles wings*, even in a great measure to surmount the highest and most insuperable like mountains of difficulties that are in the way of their Duty; *to strengthen them in the Lord, that they may walk up and down in His Name; to work all their work in them* or *for them; to work in them both to will and to do, according to his good pleasure; to put his Spirit within them, to cause them to walk in his ways, and to keep his judgements and do them*; In effect, all called-for-Duties lye in Promises in this well-ordered Covenant & *faithful is he that calleth, and will also do it*: We alas! often in our practise turn the Covenant of Grace, into a Covenant of Works; and when we are called, especially to harder Duties, to to more difficult pieces of the exercise of Godliness, we fall about them in our own strength, and to pump for it at our own hearts (which is but as it were to seek for hot water under cold Ice;) where missing it, we are ready to be discouraged, and to lye by from our work, as if it were an utterly impracticable and impossible businesse, forgetting whom we serve, and according to what Covenant; *That we are not under the Law*, as a Covenant of Works, which is a severe craver of our Duty, but affoords no strength to enable to pay it, *but under grace*, under the Covenant of giving grace; O! if we were once rightly acted here (which is the great mystery, the great practique, and holy Knack (to speak so) of the practice of Religion) and knew more experimentally what it were to serve God, and to exercise our selves to Godlinesse on the cost and expense of his own Grace, and with an eye to

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promised and covenanted Furniture; we might so work both much and well; we might abound always in the Work of the Lord, and be cheerfull in it; whereas, when we do otherwise, it makes but hard, heartless and heavy Labour, it makes us both weak at our work, and soon weary of it: from the contraries of all which we may gather so many notable helps to the exercise of Godliness.

As to the *Third* thing, to wit, *The aggravations of the sinfulness of this sin* in the Godly, their not being suitably exercised to Godliness; there are these among others. 1. That they have a Stock of habitual Graces given them, a principal of Godliness implanted in their Souls, disposing them to the exercise of it, which unregenerat men have not; to whom therefore all, even the most pressing exhortations to exercise themselves to Godliness, are some way, but as the spurrings, and prickings of a dead beast, till this principle of Godliness be implanted in them; though yet when he pleaseth, he can convey the same, in, and by the means of these exhortations, making them thereby sensible of the strength they have loosed, and of the inability to work, that they have sinfully contracted; I grant these gracious habits and principles cannot act, and exercise themselves, till they be acted and drawn forth to exercise, by the influences of supervenient, actually assisting Grace, yet the Persons privileged with them, are in near capacity to exercise them; and sure its both a sin and a shame for them that have such a principle of Godliness, not to be suitably exercised to Godliness, to them that have a power, and ability to work, that

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have hands to work, to loiter and ly by from working. 2*ly*. It is an aggravation of this sin in them; that they are taken within the bond of the Covenant of Grace, that hath so many Promises for encouraging, and enabling them to their work, and to the serious exercise of Godliness, several of which were but just now touched at. 3*ly*. This is in them an aggravation of it, that they have now and then, more or less experienced the sweet Peace, and Soul-satisfaction, that resulteth, and ariseth from suitable labour, and diligence in the work of the Lord, and from the serious exercise of Godliness; they have found, that such labour was not in vain in the Lord, that it was all, more then abundantly recompensed, even sometimes in one Duty, in one hour, in one half, or quarter of an hour, and they made to think, that all their Labour was well bestowed. 4*ly*. This aggravats it, that they have often been made sadly to smart, under affliction, and otherwise, for being so little exercised to Godliness; O! what sharp challenges, and accusations of Conscience hath this awakened on them? and what bitterness hath it brought them under? 5*ly*. This is an aggravation of it, that they have frequently, in their most retiered, serious and sedate thoughts, judged them singularly happy, and have blessed them in their very hearts, whom they have observed to be most seriously, equally and constantly exercised to Godliness, and most busied in working out their own Salvation, with the greatest measure of fear and trembling; looking on their case as very desirable, what ever was their Lot in the World, and coveting to be in such a Case,

though they should be walted with all their external crosses, inconvenient and incommoding circumstances. 6ly. This is an aggravation of it in them, that they have often resolved, purposed, promised and engaged to the Lord, that they should through his Grace, be more then ever diligent, and laborious in their main work, and beyond whatever they were exercised to Godliness; to which Resolutions and Ingagements they yet run eross by their frequent interruptions of diligence in, and vacations from this blessed exercise.

As for the *Fourth*, to wit. the *Prejudices* which they sustain, and the *Disadvantages* they are at thereby, they are very many, and very great; whereof these are some (for who can recount them all?) *First*, It often brings the truth of their gracious State, and the reality of their Godlineſſe under question and debate, and raiseth a mist of Doubts, Fears and Jealousies about the same, and indeed it's not unsuitable to the Wisdom, Holiness and Jealousie of God, that such Lolterers, and lazie Lyers by, in so great a measure in this exercise, should be thus chastised and punished. 2ly. It brings them to much Spiritual Poverty, even as it were to a piece of Bread; it is in a measure, the language of their lazie practice and posture, *A little slumber, a little sleep, and a little folding of the hands to sleep*; and this brings on their *want and poverty as a traveller, and like an armed man: as the hand of the diligent maketh rich, so the slothful soon come to poverty: and he becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand: as the soul of the diligent is made fat, so the slouthfull man is cloathed with ragges.* 3ly.

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This Spiritual Sloathfulneſs makes them in a great meaſure, as it were, tributary to their Luſts, whereas the hand of the more diligent rule over them; if we may thus far allude to theſe words of the wiſe man, *Prov.* 12. *v.* 25. *The hand of the diligent ſhall bear rule, but the ſloathfull ſhall be under tribute.* 4*ly.* It greatly obſtructs grouth, and progreſs in Godlineſs, and *ye ſhall go forth,* (ſayeth the Prophet *Malachy, Chap.* 4. to wit, to your Work, beſtirring your ſelves to it) and *ye ſhall grow up as calves of the ſtall, then ſhall ye know, if ye follow on to know the Lord,* Hoſ. 6. *They ſhall run to and fro, and knowledge ſhall be increaſed,* Dan. 12. 5*ly.* It makes the exerciſe of Godlineſs the more difficult, and the many impediments that lye in the way thereof, the more hardly ſuperable; It's here with the Godly Perſon, as it is with an Archer, whoſe Bow, when he is long out of uſe of ſhooting grows hard on him, and is not ſo eaſily drawn, as when he ſhoots more frequently, and ordinarly; and as it is with a man, that ſeldom haunts a way, that is not ſoon nor eaſily known, even by them that have ſeveral times travelled it; it thereby becomes the harder to be known by him, and the more fearfull, whereas it grows eaſie, couthſome, and pleaſant to him that frequently paſſeth through it; the words of Apoſtle, 2 *Pet.* 1. *v.* 10, 11: Are admirably appoſit to this purpoſe, *Therefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election ſure, for if ye do theſe things, ye ſhall never fall; for ſo an entrance ſhall be miniſtred to you abundantly into the everlaſting kingdom of our Lord and and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt;* Your diligence ſhall

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through Gods blessing make your way and enter
trance to the Kingdom, Patent, Pleasant and no
easily passible. *6ly.* It notably hurts, weakens
and darkens the lively hope of Heaven, and of
the Glory of the Lord, as may be clearly gather-
ed from the mighty influence that serious dili-
gence hath on the clearing up, and strengthning
of the same, *Shewsorth* (sayeth the Apostle
Heb. 6.v.11.) *the same diligence unto the full assur-
ance of hope to the end*; And when he is speaking
of the hope of the Resurrection from the Dead,
Acts 24. *v.* 15. he subjoyns, *v.* 16. *And herein
do I exercise my self always, to have a conscience
void of offence toward God and toward men*; in-
sinuating that, as that hope influenced his dili-
gent exercise, so it had a reciprocall influence on
his hope; and when towards the close of his
Course, 2 *Tim.* 4. *v.* 7. he hath given us a most
sweet account of his singularly serious diligence
in the exercise of Godliness, *I have fought a good
fight, I have finished my course, I have keeped the
faith*, He sheweth *v.* 8. what a mighty stroak that
had upon his hope, *and henceforth there is laid up
for me a crown.* *7ly.* It's if not presently attend-
ed, yet at least one time or another, followed
with many bitter Challenges, and galling Accu-
sations of a guilty Conscience, when reflected on,
more especially, in some notable strait and diffi-
culty, then, then, even the Godly are made
to their cost, to know that it is a bitter and evil
thing, that they so far departed from the Lord,
and that his Fear was so little before their eyes,
to hold them closser at their work, the exercise of
Godlinesse. *8ly.* It provoks the Holy & Jealous
God, under their vacations from this blessed ex-
ercise

exercise, to shape out to them in his Providence, and more unpleasant, more sad and imbittering, and lesse profitable exercises; will ye not, says he on the matter to them, be prevailled with, to hold you closely and constantly at the exercise of Godliness? I shall exercise you to purpose, but little to your comfort and satisfaction; *Because*, saith the Lord to his professing People, *Deut.* 28. *v.* 47, 48. *Thou served'st not the Lord thy God with joyfulnesse and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things; therefore thou shalt serve thine enemies which the Lord shall send against thee in hunger, and thirst, and nakedness; and in want of all things*; Thus the truly Godly may by proportion be dealt with: How many sad and unpleasant pieces of exercise were carved out to Godly *David*, in his Person and Family, on the account of his Waking, and lying much by, from his wonted seriousness in the exercise of Godliness? he is a jealous God, and will, though he pardon his people their iniquities, and hear them, *yet take vengeance on their inventions*: from all which we may easily gather the contrary, great *advantages*, that would attend suitable seriousness in the exercise of Godliness.

Since Godliness is so absolutely necessary, so transcendently excellent, so very peaceful and pleasant, so greatly contenting, and so universally profitable; since it is that which is perfective of all other parts, gifts, enduements, qualifications and accomplishments of men; and puts a speciall lustre and splendor on them, as keeping them all in their own room, and place, in due subordination to it self; as helping to draw them forth, and make use of them, in their most beautifull

tifull seasons, in the right manner, and for the right ends, wherein lyeth their perfection; since Godliness most beautifully conforms to Gods Image, and is only true *God-likeness*; and is the alone object in all the world, of his special Love, of delight and complacency, that which *ravisheth the heart* of our blessed Lord Jesus, and *overcometh* him; since it will, not only remain, but also come to it's best, to it's very ακμὴ and summitie, to it's flower, vigour and prime, to the highest pitch of it's perfection, when all these other enduements and qualifications will quite wither, eternally disappear, evanish and be gone; and since the greatest undervaluers, despisers and deriders of it, will once be constrained to put a price on it; and when it will, though out of time, be earnestly coveted by them, as preferable, to all things in this World, with bitter cryes to them that are blessed with it, O! *give us of your oyl*; O! for a little of your Grace and Godliness now, which we cared so little for, and undervalued so much, and you on it's account; having looked at it but as fancy and folly, and on you for it's sake, as a company of silly fools; now, now, alas! we discover our Soul ruining, destroying and damning mistake, you were the only wise men, *who were wise to salvation*, who *chose the better part, never to be taken from you*, but we have been indeed the fools, *who forsook our own mercies, and followed after lying vanities*; who have been all our days beside our selves, in one continued fit of Phrensy and Distraction, chaseing shaddows, foolishly fancieing our selves to be happie in those things, which have all now betrayed us, and left us in our greatest strait! O happy you! O miserable

erable and wretched we! who cannot of all these things wherein we placed our happiness, expect so much as one drop of water from the tip of a finger to cool our tongue, in those flames wherein we are, by and by for ever, to be scorched and tormented: I say, since Godliness is on all these, and many other accounts, so incomparably, unparalellably and inconceivably precious and desirable; It is, and not without the justest reason, to be stranged, and wondered at, that it should be so lightly esteemed, and so little set by, so much slighted, undervalued, decryed and disgraced, by reasonable men and women, professing to believe that they have immortal Souls, capable of happiness, in the eternal enjoyment of God, and of misery, in everlasting destruction from his presence; pretending withal to some profession of Godliness; especially, considering what precious, high, and superlative thoughts and esteem God hath of the Godly, and what great and glorious Priviledges he hath condescended to bestow on them.

As for the very high esteem, that God hath of the Godly, (which may abundantly counterballance the Worlds dis-esteem, & hatred too) it doth several ways manifestly appear from the Scripture (wherewith still supposing the Readers to be intimately acquainted, I shall not touch in particular citations) as namely, *First*, from the many and various Designations, and Denominations given to them; they being called his *Heritage*, or *Inheritance*, his *Portion*, his *Pleasant Portion*, *the dearly beloved of his Soul*, (wherever whatever share the visible Church may have, yet doubtless their principal verification is, in respect

respect of the truly Godly in it,) *his Elect*, or *Chosen*, his *Peculiar People*, or the *People of his Purchase*; his *peculiar Treasure*; his *Jewels*, (which are the best, finest, and most desireable part of mans Treasure,) his *beautiful Crown*, or *crown of Glory*, his *royal Diadem* (that which Kings make great account of; his *Sons*; *born of God*; *precious Sons of Sion*; his *dear Sons* and *pleasant Children*; *Christs Brethren*; his *Saints*, or *Favourits* and *Minions* (so some read the Word) his *Glory*, such as he puts Glory on, glories in, and makes glory in him; *Princes*, *Kings*, Gods and Christs *Friends* (not engrossed and monopolized to *Abraham*, the Father of the Faithfull, but common to the whole Corporation and Society of Believers, weak and strong) Christs *Fellows* or *Companions* (what an honour was it for *Hushai* to be called King *Davids* Companion? how much greater honor is it to be called, and to be the Companion of the King of Kings ? *Heirs of the promise*, *Heirs of the Kingdom*, *Heirs of God*, *conjunct-heirs with Christ*; (men use to make great account of their Heirs who are to succeed them in great Estates, and Ancient Families) *Ransomed* and *redeemed ones*, *Children of light*, *Children of the Kingdom*; *the excellent ones of the earth*; the *Nobles*, the *worthies*, the *Goodly Ones*, the *Mighty*, or *Potent Ones*, the *Glorious Ones*, the *Illustrious*, or *renouned Ones*, the *principal Ones*; the *great Ones*, or *Grandees*; the *Gallants*; (for all these doth the Hebrew word *Psal.* 16. *v.* 4. signifie, and is accordingly, as to the most of them rendered in the Scripture) and in a conjunction together, they are called the *Queen*, the *Kings daughter*, *Princes daughter*; Christs *Spouse*,

and

nd *Bride*; the *Lambs Wife*; *Royal Priesthood*, *a Kingdom of Priests*, *a holy Nation*, *a chosen Generation*; and what not, that holds forth a igh and honourable esteem of them? which esignations involve also Priviledges. *2ly.* rom his blessing with outward prospe- ty and success in their affairs, from respect to hem, Societies, Families, and particular Per- ons, who are not Godly; so he blessed the *Pa- an Potiphars* house, for one Holy *Josephs* sake, nd *Idolatrous Labans* house, for Godly *Jacobs* ake. *3ly.* From his sometimes keeping off tem- oral Ruine and Destruction from ungodly Cor- orations, Societies, Cities, Countrey sides and ations, for the sake of a few Godly intermixed mongst them; as may be very clearly gathered om that sweet Dialogue intertained betwixt *God* nd *Abraham*, *Genes.* 18. wonderfull for the umble and reverend familiarity of it, on *Abra- ms* part, and for the gracious Low-stouping, nd condescension of the Majesty of the most igh God on the other part. *4ly.* From his ometimes giving them at their request, the lives f several ungodly Persons, with their own in me desperat and deadly dangers: as he did to *ot*, with some few of his Companions, the es of all the Passengers, and Sea men that were the Ship with them, *Acts* 27. *5ly.* From his metimes moderating, and shortning days of eat Tribulation and publick Calamities on Fa- ilies, Cities, Countrey-sides, and whole Na- ons for the Elect and Godlies sake, amongst em; which would otherwise make utter ha- ck of them; as is clear, *Matth.* 24. *v.* 21. . And if, for the unconverted elects sake, sure

no less for the Converted Elect, and Godlies sake
till they be brought to the pitch of Godline
he designs to have them at, before their goin
hence. 6ly. From his giving now and then th
wicked, as a ransome for the Godly, *Prov.* 2
18. That is, in many common calamities th
Godly get out of the danger, that seems much
threaten them, and them more then others, a
the wicked through the wise and mercifull di
posal of Divine Providence, come in their roo
as if they were a ransome for them. 7ly. Fro
his condescending now and then, to bring dow
the Enemies of his Church and People, ho
great, powerfull and established so ever th
seem to be, as he tells them, *Isa.* 43. *v.* 1
Thus sayeth the Lord your redeemer, the holy one
Israel, for your sake I have sent to Babylon, and ha
brought down all the nobles, and the Caldeans, w
cry is in the ships. 8ly. From this, that a Mi
stry, and Gospel-Ordinances are mainly gi
and kept up for their sakes; as is very cl
Ephes. 4. *v.* 11, 12, 13. Where we are told
the Apostle, That Our Lord Jesus ascended
high, *And gave some to be Apostles, some Prophe*
some Evangelists, some Pastors and Teachers, for
setting of the Saints, for the work of the Minist
and for edifying the body of Christ, till we all co
in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge
the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the m
sure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. 9ly. Fro
this, That where he hath a mind to continue a
People in a Visible-Church-state and capacit
he makes the *Holy seed*, or Godly Remnant
mongst them, to be *the substance of the Land*,
the Props, Stays, and Supports thereof, as Oa

or other strong and durable Trees, planted on the sides of causeys, or high wayes, keep them from mouldering away, to which the word seems to allude, *Isa.* 6. *v.* 13. 10*ly*. From this, That they are the only Persons in all the world, who have his allowance and approbation for their own comfort, confidently to conclude, that it was for them that Christ Jesus *Sanctified Himself*, or separate, and set himself a part for his Mediatory Office, even that they might be sanctified through the truth, as he expresly declares, *John* 17. *v.* 19. It's true, he did so for all the Elect, for all the gifted Ones, yet none but the Godly have his warrand comfortably to draw that conclusion, in reference to themselves in particular. 11*ly*. From this, that the World is for their sakes, kept from being burnt up and dissolved, as may be gathered from, 2 *Pet.* 3. *v.* 7, 8, 9. The wicked of the World would fain have the Godly out of it, and look upon them, as the great disturbers of their repose and tranquillity, *as the troublers of Israel*, and the causers, and procurers of all Calamities and Plagues that come on them, and therefore raise the heu and cry after them, as the *Pagan Romans* imputed all their calamities to the *Christians*, and their new Religion, and cryed, *ad Leones*, to the Lions, and other wild Beasts with them; but silly fools, if they had their wills, and their wish, and they were all gone out of it, all the Elect effectually called, and all the effectually-called or Godly, brought to that pitch of Godliness appointed for them, while they stand in the nursery, under the drop of Gospel-Ordinances, before their last transplantation to that higher and better Soil,

to be planted up and down the Banks of that pure Christal River, that flows from under the Throne of God, under the beating of the beams of the Sun of Righteousnes shining in his strength; when they shall be loaden with the Fruits of Righteousnesse, all in their Prime and perfection (as it were) for bigness, colour, smell, and taste, never to rot, wither, or fall off; I say, if all the Elect and Godly were once out of the World, it would quickly be all in a flame, and conflagration about the ears of the rest; O! unkind, ungrate, and foolish, yea, madly prejudicated World, against the not only innocent, but usefull Godly in it!

This very great respect that the Majesty of God hath for, and the very high esteem that he hath of the Godly, ought by them to be improven. 1. Towards their excitment to wonder, even to an holy extasie, and transport of admiration, at his gracious condescending to make them Godly, and when he hath made them such, to make such account of them, 2*ly*. Towards deep humiliation, and Soul-abasement before him, under the sense of his so great goodness, in putting such a value upon them, who considered in themselves, are so little valuable. *Even less then the least of all his mercies, and unworthy of all the truth and faithfullness which he hath shewed unto them*; And who have reason with humbling admiration to cry, *what are we, and our fathers houses, that thou hast brought us hitherto? according to thine own heart, hast thou done all these great things unto thy servants.* 3*ly*. Towards raising and screwing their accompt and esteem of his own most Blessed, Super-eminent, transcendently

scendently glorious, excellent and worthy self, and of all his precious interests and concerns; there being, without all controversie, infinitely much more reason, for their high esteem of him, then there is for his so high esteem of them? and 4*ly*. Towards holily passionat pleading with themselves, what they ought to be, to do, and to suffer for God, as he shall call them to it, *what manner of persons they ought to be in all holy conversation and godliness*; and what distance they ought to keep from every thing that may sinfully debase them that are so highly exalted in Gods esteem; or that may in the least darken, and render doubtfull to themselves such high advancement; saying to every tentation to such a thing, with holy height and greatness of Spirit, with spiritually generous disdain and detestation, *should such a man as I do this?*

As for the great and glorious *Priviledges* vouchsafed to the Godly, they are so very many that they can hardly, if at all be numbred, or reckoned up in order before him; The whole of Christs purchase by his Death belongs to them; all the exceeding great & precious Promises of the Covenant of Grace are theirs; *They are blessed with all spirituall blessings in heavenly places* (or things) *in Christ Jesus*; *all things are theirs, whether life or death, things present, or things to come*; *all are theirs*; The whole spacious field of the Scripture, or the great part of it is sowed, and planted thick and full of them; we shall therefore only glean a few, by which we may judge of the rest; 1. then, They are the only Persons in all the World, *whom God hath set a part for himself*, (as the Psalmist expressly asserts, *Psal.* 4. *v.* 3.) whom he hath

separated, severed and differenced from all other for himself, whom he hath wonderfied, marvelized, or wonderfully separated for himself (for so much the *Hebrew* word signifies;) this is a vastly comprehensive *Privilledge*; speaking the Godly to be set a part for admission to special fellowship with God, to intimat and familiar converse and acquaintance with him; to be set a part for being the objects of the communications of his special Love of Delight and Complacency, *He loveth the upright, and taketh pleasure in them that fear him, and in those that hope in his mercy.* And to be set a part for special acceptable service to him; he serves himself it's true of others even of the worst of men, yea, of the very Devils; but he accepts of no service, but what is performed by the Godly, they only are *Thus accepted in the beloved*; from all which the rest of the World, not only without, but also within the visible Church are utterly excluded, of what rank and quality soever they be; being all confined, and appropriated to this honourable Company of the Godly, whom, and whom only he hath thus admirably set a part for his own proper and peculiar use. *2ly.* They are the only Persons, who may warrantably, and to their comfort, lay claim to the benefite of Christs intercession; I do not deny, but freely grant, that he interceeds for all the Elect, for all that are given to him of the Father, for whom only he prayed, and not for the reprobate World, as he himself sayes expressly, *John* 17. *v.* 9. Yet none of the Elect before their conversion & being made Godly, (for till then, they cannot know themselves to belong to Gods purpose of Election) may comfortably

fortably conclude themselves to be reached by the benefit of his intercession, either while he was here on earth, or; as he is now in heaven at the right hand of God, making intercession; that is the Priviledge of the Godly only; which is a singularly comfortable and refreshful one, more especially, when they are, to their grief, much out of case, and indisposed to pray, and intercede for themselves; whose liberty also in interceeding for themselves is nothing else, but the rebounding, as it were, of his intercession for them. 3ly. They may, with Gods allowance, and approbation, look at themselves, as the *common good* (to speak so) of God, and of the Mediator; of all the three Persons of the blessed, glorious, dreadful and adorable Trinity, according to these sweetest words of our Lord, *John* 17. *v.* 10. *And all thine are mine, and mine are thine.* O happy they that come under this reckoning, It's no great matter whose they be, what they be, and how they be in the World. 4ly. They are with much pitie and tender compassion noticed, as being in the World; where all the sins, temptations, and snares are; where all the sorrows, afflictions and troubles are; where all the complaints, and sad hearts are; where all the adversaries, and evil occurrents are; where all the dishonour to God is; where all the evil examples are; according to that tenderest representation made of their case under these circumstances, while sojourners, by our Lord Jesus to his Father, in his last solemn Prayer, (a prelude of his Intercession in Heaven) *John* 17. *v.* 11. *These are in the world*; and therefore (as if he had said) much to be pitied, and standing

much in need of thy keeping, whom for this cause I commend to thee to be keeped by thee; Ah it's a matter of much greater difficulty and hazard to be in the World, then we are aware of: the Good Lord help us well through it, and fairly out of it. 5. They are exempted from the Reign and Dominion of Sin, under which all the rest of the unregenerat World, without and within the visible Church are; *The whole world lying still in wickedness*, (as the Apostle *John* says, 1 Ep. Chap. 5. v. 19.) Immersed and drowned in it; prevail it may, and Alas frequently it doth; but reign it never shall any more over them. It's life is for a time prolonged, but it's dominion is taken away; however restlessly it may scramble towards the Throne of it's Dominion, from which renewing Grace hath degraded and detruded it, yet shall it never again recover it; *For*, (sayeth the Apostle to Believers, *Rom. 6. v. 14.*) *Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the Law, but under Grace*; the Arm of it's Dominion is quite broken, so that no Roller shall ever be found for it, to bind it up, and to inable it, to hold any more the Sword of opposition against God, and his Grace, as it had wont to do; and his taking away it's Dominion, and reigning Power, is a certain presage, and pledge, and a comfortable prelude of the quickly approaching utter expulsion thereof, as to it's indwelling Power; O great Priviledges. 6ly. They have Christ given to them, to be a *Leader*: he *who is their God for ever and ever, will also be their guide even unto death: They shall be guided by his counsel, and afterward received to Glory. He leads them in the way wherein they*

should

should walk, O! but they are well guided whom God guides. 7*ly*. They are under the tender and accurat inspection of the vigilant and actuous providence of God, *whose eyes run to and fro throughout all the earth, to shew himself strong, on the behalf of those whose hearts are perfect towards him*; As nothing comes at them by guess, and at random, so nothing, but what he orders very well. 8*ly*. His Omniscience, or all-knowledge, is exercised, and set on work by his infinite Love and Wisdom; how to deliver them out of their tentations, *He knows* (sayeth the Apostle Peter, 2 *Ep. Chap.* 2. *v.* 9. *how to deliver the Godly out of temptations*; And how many soever they be, he will in his own time and way, actually *deliver them out of them all*; When his People are at a stand, *non plus'd*, and at their wits end, and know not in all the world what to do, nor how to be delivered, it is not so with him, who *is wonderfull in counsel, and excellent in working*, to whom many ways of delivery are obvious, when there is not so much as one so to them; That *which is marvelous in their eyes*, is not at all *so in his, who seeth not as man seeth*, and of *whose understanding* (particularly, as to ways of delivering the Godly out of temptations) *there is no search*. 9*ly*. In all their tentations and troubles, of whatever nature they be, they have the feeling and tender-hearted High Priest, kindly, and cordially to sympathize, and bear burden with them, *who is afflicted in all their afflictions*; All the greatest grounds of sympathie amongst men, concur eminently in him, *viz.* strong and matchless Love, near and strait union, and Relation, and personal experience of the

same, or like temptations and troubles, whi
make him a singular, and non-such sympathiz
He was tempted in all points, as his people are,
without sin, and is able from his own experien
to sympathize with, and *succour them that a*
tempted; he retains still *compassion*, though no
free from all personal *passion*, and hath still a *f*
how feeling, though now freed from *feeling*. O
so feelingly, as he is touched with the infirmi
es, with the temptations and troubles of the Go
ly, though in an unconceivably glorious manne
suited to his state of exaltation; the aiking (
speak so) of the smallest finger, and of the le
toe of his mystical Body doth, as it were, m
kindly thrill, or sound up, to the very hea
of him who is head thereof; so that they ma
and are warranted from this very consideratio
to come boldly to the throne of grace, that they m
obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of ne
to pray to the God that hears prayer, with co
fidence to get a very kind welcome, and heari
in all that's agreeable to his will, that's for h
glory, and for their good. 10*ly*. All things th
meet with, particularly all their crosses, troubl
and afflictions, are made, through the Sov
raign influence, and co-operation of his speci
Grace, to co-operat, to work together for the
good, their spiritual good, *viz*. Further pur
ing away of their sin, and participation of th
holiness of God, and making them, by all thin
they meet with, even the most sadly circum
stantiated, to be more and more *meet to partak*
of the inheritance of the Saints in light; If the
were no other Promise of the Covenant, or pri
viledge of the Godly, this alone might serve t
com

mend, and indear to our Souls, an Interest in that Covenant, and a being in a state of Godliness; without which no Spiritual Good can warrantably be looked for, from any thing that occurrs, but rather a curse in and on all; and with which, Spiritual Good & profit may be expected from every the most Cross, and someway crushing Providence, by the Godly, waiting on him for it, in his own way. 11*ly* They may warrantably, though with wondering, look upon themselves, as Legatars in Christs Testament, to whom he hath, *John* 17. *v.* 27. *left his peace* (O! rich Legacy) and concerning whom he hath left his will, that he will needs have them all with him in Heaven; *whither he is gone to prepare a place for them*, and *will come again to receive them to himself, that where he is, they may be also*; *Father, I will*, (sayeth he, *John* 17. *v.* 24.) *that those also whom thou hast given me, may be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me*; As if he had said, Father, I may not, I will not want them, I must have them with me, I cannot brook Heaven, and my Glory without them; The Father is hence as well willing as the Son, for, saith he, *Luke* 12. *v.* 32. *Fear not little flock, for it is your Fathers good will to give you the kingdom.* 12*ly*. Look on whole clusters of their Privileges hanging on several branches of the Promises made to the Godly, under the Denomination of *overcomers*, or of them that are a overcoming (as the Greek Participle bears) by our blessed Lord Jesus, in the 2. and 3. *Chapters* of the *Revelation*, full of that high-countrey-wine of strongest consolation, *They shall eat of the tree of life that is*

the midst of the Paradise of God; they shall not be hurt of the second death; they shall eat of the hidden manna; and have given to them *the white stone, and the new name, which no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it, they shall have power over the nations to rule them with a rod of iron, and to break them in pieces, as a potters vessel*; and they shall have *the morning starre*; they *shall walk with Christ in white, their names shall not be blotted out of the book of Life*; they *shal be by him confessed before his Father, and before his angels*; they *shall be made Pillars in the temple of God, to go no more out*; they shall *have the name of God, and Christs new name written on them*, by his own hand; *They shall sit with Christ on his throne, even as he overcame, and is set down with the Father on his throne.* What shall I say more of their Priviledges? *Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of any man* (how knowing and Godly soever) *to conceive* (adequately, and with full comprehension) *These things that God hath laid up for them that fear him, and trust in him before the sons of men.*

As there is just ground for the Godly to think and say, *Blessed are the people that are in such a condition*, even the People *whose God is the Lord, and whom he hath chosen for his inheritance*, Blessed are the Godly; so there is no less ground yet again to strangel and wonder, and that with an addition, at the undervaluing, dimiolshing, depressing, depreciating and debasing thoughts, that most men and women, even living within the verge of the visible church, and making some sort of profession of, and pretentions to Godliness, have of it, and of the Godly; notwithstanding

standing this very high esteem, that God hath of them; and these many glorious Priviledges wherewith he hath dignified them, on account of their Godliness: and considering the surpassing amiableness of the Object, that it might rather, (as *Plato* sayes of true vertue) *mirabiles amores sui excitare, excite and provoke to wonderfull loves of its self*; whence doth? whence can this proceed? It may proceed in the *First* place, from a secret, unobserved, undervalue, from a low and light esteem of the Blessed Majesty of the most high God himself, and a real and special interest in him (wherewith the Body of his professed People is charged *Deut.* 32. *v.* 15.) For it were not possible, if God himself were suitably valued, and esteemed, in any tolerable measure, according to his transcendent excellency, and infinit worth, but Godliness, and the Godly that are so nearly related to him, and does so much resemble him, and are withall so much prized by him, would be highly esteemed by them; according to these *two* observable Passages to this purpose, the one whereof we have, 2 *Sam.* 7. *v.* 22. Where God is wondred at, and proclaimed to be incomparable, and non-such, *wherefore thou art great, O Lord God, for there is none like thee, neither is there any God beside thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears*, and *v.* 23. an admiring esteem of his People (eminently verified in the Godly among them) is subjoyned, as the native and someway necessary result of the former, *and what one nation in the earth is like unto thy people, even like unto Israel, whom the Lord went to redeem for a people to himself?* The other

we have, *Deut.* 33 *v.* 26. Where God is affirmed, to be matchlesly marvelous, *There is none like unto the God of Jesurun,* (an usual designation of *Israel*) and *v.* 29. There is added an admiring and ravishing exclamation at the incomparable happiness of his People, *Happy art thou, O! Israel, who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord?* And accordingly our Lord says to his Disciples, for comforting them against the worlds hatred, contempt and persecution, *John* 15. *v.* 18. *If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you*; insinuating thereby plainly, that if the World had loved and esteemed him, they would also have loved and esteemed them proportionably; and that the cause of their hatred and disesteem of them, was their hatred, and disesteem of himself; It is therefore not so much to be stranged and wondred at, that they, *who saw no form nor beauty in him, nor any thing why they should desire him,* who yet *is all desirous, who is comely and excellent, the brightness of the Fathers glory, and the express image of his person,* that infinit beauty; should see none in the Godly: and it is on this account, that the Apostle, *John* 1 *Ep: Chap.* 3. *v.* 1. Being ravished into a transport of admiration, at the inexpressible manner of the Love of God, in making himself, and a few others his Sons, anticipats an objection that he saw, would be made by the ungodly World, what do ye talk at such a rate of the love of God to you, and of your being his Sons? we see no excellency in you more than in others, I acknowledge (as if he had said) that *the world knoweth us not,* doth not value nor esteem us, but that's no great matter, not much to be regarded

garded, *because it knoweth not him*, we but meet with that measure from the World that he met with.

In the *next* place this proceeds not a little from the implacable malice, and furious wrath of the Devil, whose great eye sore (to speak so) Godliness is, and the grand obstruction of the thriving and success of his Kingdom in the World, whereby many of his Subjects are snatched from under his dominion, and made sincerely to design, and vigorously to endeavour the utter ruin thereof; who therefore hath made it his great work and business in all Ages, to bring Godliness, and the truly Godly into contempt and disgrace; by industrious and indefatigable endeavours, to raise and propogate, to beget and cherish a number of *Prejudices* against it and them, and to throw the dung of bespattering, deforming and disfiguring, mis-representations on the beautiful and amiable face thereof (which yet under all these disguises, looks out to a spiritual eye, with the fresh colour, and beautiful brightnesse of Heaven, as it were, and with a Divine Splendor and Majesty) that he may thereby fright from it, as some hideous Monster; which prejudices he hath in this generation improved, and screwed to a great height? It will therefore neither be impertinent, nor unprofitable to take a view of some of these Prejudices, and to shew the unreasonableness, grounslesness and utter irrelevancie of them.

The *First* whereof, may be this, that he labours by all means to represent Godliness, as strait-lacing, cumbersome, fashious, vexatious and impracticable thing, all the *years*, and

whereof cannot possibly be holden up with, that by such a false representation of it, he may either altogether alienat, and (as we just now said) fright men from it, or at least faint them, as to any vigorous prosecution of it: In order to the rolling away of which Prejudice, we would say, in the *First* place, that we cannot deny, but must grant, that there is considerable difficulty in the practise of Godliness, (which appears from several things touched on before, from the Scripture;) yet what is there excellent in the World that hath not difficulty in it? nay, the more excellent and sublime any Science or Art be, it hath the greater difficulty, in coming by any considerable insight in it; from pursuing after which, men of Spirit and Parts are not deterred, notwithstanding all the difficulties in their way; the contemplation of the excellency of the thing makes them, not only comport with, and digest all the difficulties, but also in hope to come at it, to judge all their labour and pains, in surmounting these difficulties, well bestowed; and why should Godliness, the incompareably most excellent of all things, be only scarred at, because of the difficulty that is in the way of coming at it, or of being suitably exercised unto it, and it alone judged unworthy of the labour requisit in pursuing after it? But in the *Next* Place, let me say, that all the difficulties that lye in the way of Godliness, are superable and passible, thorow the Grace of God, who is not *an austere Master*, (as the unprofitable Servant in the Gospel wickedly mis-represents him) *that reaps where he hath not sowed, and gathers where he hath not strawed*; but such an one, who loves not to be served *with that*

which

which costs him nothing, nay, he will either be served on the cost, and expence of his own Grace, or not at all; he sends no man on this warfare, on his own Charges, and takes it ill, if any go on their own, and not on his; and the more expence he is put to in his own service, he thinks he is the better served, and the more honoured by his servants, as knowing well that their layings out, expendings must be according to what they call for, and receive from him; and the more he layes out, he looks for the greater incomes; who would not readily and cheerfully serve such a Master, in the exercise of Godliness, who is willing, and well content to help them to work their work, and also to pay their wages, to enable them to do their Duty, and to reward them when they have done, as if they had done it all alone? The Godly have a well-ordered, and full Covenant stuft with Promises, relating to all commanded Duties, and *He is faithfull that promiseth, who also will do it*; They have likewise an able and responsal Cautioner, and suretie of this Covenant, who is surety, not only for the Debt of their Guilt, but also of their Duty; and they have withal, a most liberal frank-hearted, and open-handed God to deal with, and serve, *who gives bountifully, and liberally to all that ask of him in faith, and up-braids none*; for seeking much, or for seeking frequently from him, in order to the doing of his own work: Is there not then reason to say, that all the difficulties in the way of this exercise of Godliness are superable, & that all things called for in the point of Duty are possible, and feasable to him that believes? to wit, in that manner, and measure

that he may humbly, and confidently expect Gods gracious approbation, and acceptation on Christs account; Godliness then is neither easie nor impossible, neither without all difficulty, nor at all invincibly difficult; O! admirably wise, well contrived, tempered, and poised dispensation.

A *Second Prejudice* is, that Godliness is but a chimerical figment, a meer conceit and fancie, having no reality at all in it, and that they who seriously and sincerely exercise themselves to it, are a company of meer Fanaticks; a most injurious, and unreasonable prejudice, yea, a most groundless fancy; for true Godliness is a most real, solid and substantial thing, since the more Spiritual any thing is, it is the more real; and if the Divine Essence be a reality, and (as controvertably the greatest of all realities (as hath never been doubted of, let be down-right denyed by any, but desperate speculative Atheists, who yet are often secretly lashed by their own Consciences, witnessing against them, for their denyal thereof) then sure Godliness, that maketh the nearest approaches to him, and carrieth the vivest resemblance of him, must be a great reality; *That I may cause those that love me* (saith the eternal, and substantial wisdom of the Father, *Prov.* 8. *v.* 21.) *to inherit substance*; and the Spiritual Liberty, wherewith the Son of God, *makes free* (*viz.* from the bondage of Sin and Satan, & in the exercise of Godliness) *his liberty* indeed; no imaginary, or fanciful thing, but a great reality, no other Liberty being worthy the name of Liberty, being but nominal, notional, and fancied Liberty, when compared with this

most

most real and true Liberty: May upon the contrary, all these things which the men of the World count the greatest, if not the only realities, and place their satisfaction and happiness in, are meer fancies and shadows without any true substance, or reality; Hear *Solomon* the wisest of all meer men, who sounded the depth of them, speak to this purpose of Riches, *Prov.* 23. *v.* 4, 5. *Labour not* (sayeth he) *to be rich, wilt thou set thine eyes* (or as the word is,) let thine eyes fly) *upon that which is not?* which is a meer nonentity, or nullity, as to any true satisfaction to the Soul of a man, a thing that hath in that respect, no being but in the fancie and apprehension of the poor deluded man, *For riches certainly make themselves wings, and flee away, as an eagle towards heaven*; and *David* his Father who *was wiser then the Ancients, then all his enemies, yea, then all his Teachers*; who speaking of the men of the World, that seek and get their Portion in this Life, *Psal.* 39. *v.* 6. sayeth of them, *Surely every man walketh in a vain shew* (or Image, as the Word is, their phantasie representing to them an Image of what is not) *They are disquieted in vain* (to no purpose, as to any solid satisfaction, cheasing, as it were, a buble on the water, or a feather in the wind, even to wearines) *They heap up* Pleasures, Riches, and Honours (for all may be comprehended *Riches*, being supplied in the Text, where is no more *but they heap up*;) all are but shadows, Images, Dreams, and Fancies without substances or solidity; And the Divine Historian *Luke*, who speaking, *Acts* 25. *v.* 23. of *Agrippa*, and his Sister *Bernice*, their coming to hear *Paul* discourse by the grant of *Festus*,

gay, goodly, gorgeous, and glorious apparel, tells us, that *they come with great pomp*, the *Greek* is *with much phantasy* μετα πολλης φαντασιας; such account doth the Holy Ghost make of all these supposed great realities, even to be *Phantasies*; and the eagerest pursuers after them, and greatest admirers of them, seeking, and placing satisfaction and happiness in them, to be Phantasticks. Now that Godliness is a great reality (whatever the blind, and prejudicated World think of it) appears further, by the real effects of it: As 1. by the real and palpable change that it produceth on the Hearts and Lives of them whom it takes hold of, mortifying strongest Lusts, subduing highly distempering humours and passions, making, as it were, of Wolves and Tigers, Lambs and little Children, bringing down strong holds, and leading into captivity every high thought, to the obedience of the Lord Jesus; So that men (who were before either prophane or cared for none of these things;) dare not take the Latitudes they were wont to take, nor to think, speak, or do, as they were wont, for the World. 2*ly*. By the Peace, passing understanding, the strong consolation, and unspeakable Joy, that sometimes flow from the enjoyment of Gods special Presence, and the up-lifted Light of his Countenance, in the exercise of it, in Ordinances and Duties of his Worship, and in the hope of the Glory of God, that quite transcend the joy that ariseth from the enjoyment of all the delights of the men of the World, though combined together, and at their best; and which they would not exchange for the most admired, and coveted things in the World; which the Psalmist confirms from his own

own experience, *Psal.* 4. 3*d*. From the grow, and trouble of Soul which the Godly sometimes have, and that in the greatest affluance of earthly comforts, and in the very midst of external enjoyments, on the account of sin, of Spiritual Desertion, and any out-lettings of Gods anger, and displeasure against them; to which purpose the Scripture is full; and to account (as some in these days do) all those Soul-agonies, and deep exercises of Sorrow and humiliation, and these Joyes, and Soul-ravishings (of which the People of God can give a very sober, and most rational account) to be but the meer products of the different temperaments of men and womens bodies, and the correspondent workings of a deluded phansie; as if the one sort, *viz.* their Spiritual Sorrows, heavines and Soul-conflicts, were nothing else, but the reeks, fums and vapours of Melancholy clouding the Fancy; and the other, *viz.* Their solid Heart-joyes, and Spiritual Raptures in the enjoyment of Gods gracious Presence, and in the up-lifted Light of his Countenance, were nothing, but the raisings of the Blood, and the breakings out of the natural Spirits, from under the cloudings of these Melancholy Fumes, and the refreshing of the phancy, with more brisk and active Spirits, or the effects of a sanguine complexion; speaks such men, as to be altogether strangers unto, and utterly unacquainted with such exercises, (the heart of a serious exercised Christian, *knows its own bitterness, and a stranger doth not intermedle with its joy*) so to be deeply guilty of blasphemous reflections on the work of the Spirit of God, in the Godly, and of giving the down-right lye to the experiences of

to ..., recorded in the Sacred Scriptures; the Lord rebuke this prophane and petulant, this bold, and blasphemous Spirit. 4ly. By the holy undervalue on most solid and deliberat reckoning that is brings the Godly, when near God, and in a Spiritual Frame, to have of all things in the World, offering to compare and compeat with the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ, bringing down (to lay so) the market of them, and making the price of them all to fall low, even so low, as to be counted but *loss* and *dung*; So that some, and those Persons of quality, of good Estates, and in high and honourable imployes, and that in the very flower of their youth, have quit and abandoned all, when they could not be got keeped with a good Conscience; whereof the Noble and Renowned Marquess of *Vico Galleacius Carracciolus* amongst others, is a famous and memorable instance. 5ly. By the patient and pleasant, calm and composed, resolute and curagious, solacious, cheerful and joyful, not only suffering of losses, taking joyfully the spoiling of their goods, for Christ and the Gospels sake, for Religion and Righteousness sake, but also of most exquisit torments, and of violent and bloody deaths, refusling to accept of deliverance, on sinfully dishoneſt and dishonourable terms; Ah! is all this but fancies; God forbid we should ever admit the thought of it.

A *third Prejudice* is, That the serious exercise of Godliness doth soften mens Spirits, dis-spirit, and emasculat them; and is a thing unworthy of great wits, of Persons of parts, of fine and well-refined Spirits: A most groundless and gross prejudice, and a most miserable mistake; on the con-

contrary. If we consult the Sacred Oracle of the Scriptures, we will find that Godliness doth truely elevat, greaten, and innoble mens Spirits, and makes them to be of *another* and *more excellent* Spirit, then the rest of the World are, *The righteous being more excellent than his neighbour*, whoever he be, and how qualified and accomplished so ever, as the Holy Ghost by the wise man asserts, *Prov.* 12. *v.* 26. And if we judge of the excellency, and true elevation of mens Spirits (as we may and ought) according to their projects, and the designs which they drive; and if mens designs be suited and proportioned to their interests (as no doubt they are, just of the same elevation, low, according to the lowness of the interest, & high, according the height of it;) Then we may confidently conclude, that of all persons in the World, the Godly are of the most elevated, and excellent Spirits; for, without all doubt, they have the best and choicest interests, and accordingly drive the most truly generous, noble, heroick, magnanimous, and gallant designs: Take notice but, amongst many others, of these *two* Scriptures holding furth their interests, and correspondent designs, the one whereof is, 2. *Cor.* 6. *v.* 16, 18. Where we find their interests to be *Gods dwelling in them, and walking in them*; his owning and acknowledging them to be his *Sons and Daughters*, and himself *to be their Father*; O noble, notable and non-such interests! and their designs suited to these interests is holden furth, *Chap.* 7. *v.* 1. *Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse our selves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the God*: The other

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Scripture is, 1 *John* 3. Where in the *two first verses*, we have their interest, holden out, they are in a wonderfull, inexpressible, and inconcelvable manner beloved of God, and adopted by him, *Behold*, (saith *John* in a transport of admiration,) *what manner of love the Father hath shewed to us, that we should be called the Sons of God, now we are the Sons of God, though it doth not yet* at all *appear* to the World, nor fully to ourselves, *what we shall be, but when he shall appear, we shall be like him*, perfect, like him according to creature capacity, *and shall see him as he is*, even face to face, and be privileged with the immediat full, and never to be interrupted injoyment of him; O remarkable, rare and ravishing interests! and what, I pray, is the design they drive well becoming, and worthy of such interests? *Every one* (saith he) *that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure*; where are there such interests, or designs in all the World? there were never such high and honourable designs driven by any of all the so much famed Heros in the world, being meerly worldly men, such as *Hercules*, *Hector*, *Achilles*, *Alexander the great*, *Scipio*, *Pompey*, *Julius Cesar*, and others the like; nor had ever any of them such interests; all their interests were earthly, and low, and their designs correspondent, not rising one Cubit, nay, not one Inch above the earth, but all conversant about these poor, low, empty and terren interests. If we shall yet further take a look of that most despised, and decryed, that most derided and flouted at piece of the exercise of Godliness, *viz. weeping in prayer*, or *seeking the Lord with weeping and supplications*, we will find God speaking of it, (*Hos.*

12. v. 3. compared with *Genes.* 32.) as a most honourable Piece of exercise, worthy of a truly great Spirit; in down-right opposition, and contradiction to the undervaluing and contemptuous opinion that the World hath of it; and so as it will be long ere he speak at that rate of the meerly civil courteous behaviour of the best bred men in the World, *French* or *Italian*; *Jacob* (saith he) *by his strength had power with God*, or *was a Prince*, or *behaved Princely*, and how, I pray, was this? we are told, v. 4. *he wept, and made supplication*, that's a piece of *Princely behaviour* indeed; O! how vastly different are the thoughts of God about Godliness, in all the parts of it, from the thoughts of the men of the World?

The *Fourth Prejudice* is, That serious Godliness is a thing only to be found with shallow-pated, short-witted, low and weak-spirited Persons: In reference to which Prejudice, I would say, in the *first* place, it cannot be denyed, that in the more ordinary way of the dealing of Grace (to shew the Freeness and Soveraignity thereof) it looks not to the most eminent Persons; Emperours, and Kings, great States Men, great Philosophers, great Lawyers, and most refined naturall wits; accordingly our Lord sayes, *I thank thee Father, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to babes*, to such as are, for most part, but Babes for [illegible] and parts, in comparison of these others; and *that the children of this world are wiser in their own generation than the children of light*, not only wiser in their own matters, then the Godly are Spirituals, but ordinarily also in the things of World then the others: And the Apost[illegible]

speaks the *Corinthians* thus, *Ye see your calling, Brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called, but God hath chosen the foolish things, and the weak things of the world, base things that are despised, and no-things or things that are not*: and the matter is ordered so, that none may think that Godliness is confined to Greatness, or that God is obliged to them, because they are Great Men, and that the eminency of their Stations, or the fineness of their Spirits and Parts, hath any meritorious influence on the procurement of Grace and Godliness (which men would be ready to fancy, if such were more ordinarly, and numerously called then others;) *and that no flesh may glory in his presence, but he that glorieth, may glorie in the Lord*; and that *the wisdom of the wise, and the things that are mighty may be confounded, and the things that are may be brought to nought*; Those worldly wise men are inclined to think, that an other disposal of Grace to other sorts of Persons then are ordinarily called by it, and priviledged with it, would have been more suitable and reasonable, and more for it's own repute and commendation in the World: yet let me say in the *next* Place for quite removing of the Prejudice, that this cometh not at all to pass, because the serious exercise of Godliness is incompatible with, or altogether below men of high Stations, or of great natural Wits, and fine Spirits and Parts: There are many instances in the Scripture to the contrary. *Joseph* was a very wise man, and reputed to be matchless for wisdom and discretion by the King of *Egypt*, and by his wise Councellours, and *Moses*, whom he taught *wisdom*, and was thou-

and great Freedom (comparatively at least) from afflictions and troubles, shall *be cast into utter darkness, where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth*; and *into the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone.*

Glorious Godliness having thus, as the Sun in his strength, wrestled and made it's way thorow, having fairly got off, fully cleared it self from, and quite scattered all these clouds of darkning Prejudices, and disfiguring disguises; retaining still it's own eternally, unalterable, intrinsick worth, and shining forth to every spiritual eye, in it's native pristine beauty, affection-attracting amiableness, splendor, state, and majestie: It remaineth, that all you Christian Readers, and ye Noble *Ladies* in particular, indeavour through Grace, to have the same thoughts and esteem of it that God hath, and then sure you cannot possibly be mistaken about it, nor ever have too high and overvaluing thoughts of it; and the more that it is dis-esteemed, contemned, vilified, set at nought, contradicted, and blasphemed by the blind and prejudicated World, without and within the visible Church, to have it raised the higher in your esteem, and the more commended, and indeared to your heart and practise: which would, through Gods blessing, amongst many other great advantages, be waited with this, to make you, (in the due use of other appointed means) readily to fall, and side right, in debateable things, especially in these that are of greater moment; as our Lord plainly insinuats, when he says, *John 7. v. 17. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or*

of myself, and *Chap.* 8. *v.* 31, 32. *If ye continue in my word, then are ye my Disciples indeed, and ye shall know the truth; and the truth shall make you free,* accordingly the learned *Doctor More*, speaking somewhat to this purpose, in his *Mystery of iniquity, page* 89. says, that *purity of heart and life, is the very light and Chrystalin Orgin, the very eye of the Soul*: And that withall you may be in case, on good and solid grounds, to draw these strange inferences, and *Therefores*, with the Psalmist, *Psal.* 119. *v.* 26, 27, 28. *They have made void thy law, Therefore I love thy commandments above gold, yea, above fine gold; Therefore I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right, and I hate every false way*: The *four* following sweet *Sermons* preached by famous *Mr. Durham, whose praise is in the Churches of Christ*, commend to you the great, the inestimably great gain of Godliness, and the peculiar contentment wherwith the exercise of it, in power, is inseparably attended: That these *Sermons* (which with a few others, in a very unexpected and surprizing Providence, I have had access to make ready for the Press) with the *Preamble* to them (containing my poor *Testimony*, to this most highly-valuable, however much undervalued Godliness, may come along to you all, and to your Noble *Ladyships*, in particular, with a rich and full blessing, towards the pungent, and powerful excitement of you, to the Serious and Sedulous exercise of greatly gainful and constantly contenting Godliness, that the beautiful conjunction of the Power and the Form thereof, may be found with you, is the earnest desire of,

Beloved Christians, and Noble Ladies,

Your Servant in the Gospel.